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“My Life Transparently Revealed”: Interpreting Mahler’s Worldview through an Analysis of His Middle-Period Symphonies

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through an Analysis of His Middle-Period Symphonies**

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Dedication

To my wife,
Jenna Harland

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Abstract

“My Life Transparently Revealed”: Interpreting Mahler’s Worldview through an Analysis of His Middle-Period Symphonies

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Many of the comments made by Gustav Mahler concerning the relationship between his life experiences and musical compositions have compelled scholars to interpret his work through the lens of his worldview. From the known facts of his reading habits, social circle, and references to philosophy, one can establish a general picture of Mahler’s interests, beliefs, and values. But to go beyond these generalities requires a more in-depth understanding of worldview and how it manifests in artistic expression. This project attempts to answer this need by investigating the concept of worldview through an analysis of the works of Mahler’s middle-period: the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Symphonies.

Chapter One pursues a deeper understanding of what is meant by the term “worldview” and its relationship to art. This chapter lays a theoretical foundation that combines a historically informed definition of worldview with the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur to create a methodology for the case studies that will follow. Worldviews, while variable in content, contain a tripartite structure consisting of narratives, symbols, and values. The case studies that follow examine the works of the middle period under the rubric of these elements. Chapter Two analyzes the Fifth Symphony’s narrative structure,

applying the insights of that investigation to Ricoeur’s notion of “narrative identity.” Chapter Three focuses on a specific musical symbol used in the Sixth Symphony—commonly known as the *Ewigkeit* motive—and examines how Mahler’s use of this symbol in other works illuminates its philosophical meaning and its expressive role in the Sixth. The final case study, Chapter Four, theorizes that Mahler’s compositional process serves as the outward expression of his inner beliefs. It considers the development of the Seventh Symphony as evidence of how value-structures manifest themselves as modes of being and doing. The study concludes by drawing together the insights of the three analyses to offer an interpretation of Mahler’s worldview as expressed in the symphonic trilogy of the middle period.

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, the academic literature pertaining to the life and works of Gustav Mahler is quite vast. Studies abound that situate Mahler within his historical context and connect his works to broader musical trends. The work of musicologists to de-mythologize earlier, sentimental biographical accounts—a feature common to famous historical figures—appears nearly complete. Thus, in recent years, a more well-rounded image of the composer has emerged, allowing for new and interesting insights into his music. And yet, some areas still require more scrutiny and examination, including the relationship between Mahler’s deeply held religious and philosophical views and his creative work. Although frequently discussed, this topic still requires a more nuanced approach. Despite many attempts to uncover Mahler’s beliefs by researching the available primary sources, very few scholars go further than simply listing the various authors, philosophies, and concepts referenced in these documents. Furthermore, these studies often avoid addressing whether or not the ideas espoused by these thinkers cohere with Mahler’s own values. Therefore, this project seeks to investigate the relationship between Mahler’s convictions and his music by addressing the principal concept that links them together: worldview.

I prefer the all-encompassing term “worldview”—*Weltanschauung* in its original coinage—over narrower categories (philosophy, religion, etc.) frequently found in investigations of this type. The flexibility of worldview as a concept allows for the consideration of a wider variety of influences. In addition to metaphysical ideas, worldviews may account for values derived from one’s historical context, literary interests, or musical influences. Most importantly, the concept of worldview provides an investigative framework that will inform the musical

analyses of this project. I begin with the presupposition that Mahler's worldview profoundly shaped his approach to the symphony. While one could say the same for any artistic personality, Mahler proves an enticing subject for such an investigation for two reasons: (1) he consistently maintained that his music emerged directly from his experiences, and (2) throughout his life, Mahler tirelessly sought answers to his metaphysical questions. As his friend and colleague Bruno Walter related, "a vivid concern about intellectual questions strengthened him and helped to still a nearly unquenchable thirst for knowledge and comprehension. Yet his spirit never knew escape from the torturing question—For What? It was the driving impulse of his creative activity. Each work was a fresh effort to find the answer."¹ Given this connection between Mahler's questioning and his musical output, Morten Solvik concludes, "[a]ny thorough understanding of Gustav Mahler and his music must probe the complexities of his thoughts about life and existence."² Of course, many studies adhere to this prescription. But instead of interpreting Mahler's music through the perspective of worldview, I propose a reversal of this traditional course. Perhaps one could gain new insights by starting from an analysis of these works and incorporating those conclusions towards an interpretation of Mahler's worldview.

An examination of Mahler's entire compositional output, however, would certainly be a gargantuan task. Therefore, to demonstrate how one might utilize this proposed approach, I will focus on a specific period of Mahler's *oeuvre*. The symphonies of Mahler's so-called "middle period"—consisting of the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Symphonies—will form the basis of this investigation for several reasons. First, compared to the detailed studies of Mahler's other creative periods—the "*Wunderhorn*" period, pertaining to the First through Fourth Symphonies,

¹ Bruno Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, trans. Lotte Walter Lindt (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 146-47.

² Morten Solvik, "The Literary and Philosophical Worlds of Gustav Mahler," in *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham, 21-34 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 21.

and the “Late” period, which includes the Eighth, Ninth, (unfinished) Tenth, and *Das Lied von der Erde*—examinations of the middle period as a cohesive, stylistic unit are lacking. Generally, scholarly treatments of the middle period are confined to brief surveys that merely note the salient features shared among the three symphonies. There exists a need to delve deeper into their many shared characteristics, both on narrative and symbolic levels. Second, the middle-period works present an interesting interpretive challenge in that they emerged following Mahler’s public denunciation of program music in 1900. In contrast to his earlier practice of providing programmatic explanations—both in private and public—Mahler refrained from discussing what images, ideas, or narratives may have inspired the middle-period symphonies. While many scholars—though certainly not all—believe that Mahler continued to write works with extra-musical meanings, the lack of concrete evidence presents an interesting opportunity for interpretation. Finally, the middle-period coincides with several significant life changes that Mahler experienced during the years of 1900 to 1905. Undoubtedly, these exhibited a profound effect on both Mahler’s worldview and musical style in ways worth exploring.

Therefore, each of the case studies presented in Chapters Two, Three, and Four focuses on one of the three middle-period symphonies, with Chapter One serving as their conceptual foundation. The first chapter begins with a survey of the scholarly writings on Mahler’s worldview to determine the status of this research and to note methodological similarities among the various approaches. The centerpiece of the chapter considers worldview as a concept. I trace the development of the term from its initial appearance and meaning to its modern-day use, leading toward a definition of worldview and an articulation of its structure, which consists of narratives, symbols, and values. Following the establishment of a definition, the chapter pursues the question of how worldview relates to art and artistic expression. At this juncture, I introduce

the thought of Paul Ricoeur, whose philosophical work in the realm of hermeneutic phenomenology provides the connective tissue between worldview and expression. Specifically, I draw upon Ricoeur's notion of "three-fold mimesis" as a model for how one might investigate artworks within the framework of worldview. By mapping Ricoeur's three-fold model onto the tripartite structure of worldview, I articulate a methodology for exploring the middle-period symphonies that the case studies will follow.

The first case study (Chapter Two) takes narrative—the most fundamental component of worldview structure—as its point of departure. More specifically, I offer Ricoeur's notion of "narrative identity" as a more philosophically grounded alternative to autobiographical interpretations of Mahler's music. The analysis concerns the Fifth Symphony, and I preface the examination of this work with an explanation of the foundations of musical narrative theory, along with other relevant aspects of musical meaning. The second case study (Chapter Three) explores the meaning and use of a musical symbol known as the *Ewigkeit* motive within the Sixth Symphony. The chapter establishes the basis for Mahler's use of musical symbols within the context of nineteenth-century musical practices and traces the appearances of the motive—and its changing significance—throughout Mahler's *oeuvre*. After determining the *Ewigkeit* motive's array of symbolic associations, I attempt to connect its meaning to aspects of Mahler's worldview, which in turn, serves as the basis for an interpretation of its use in the Sixth. The third case study (Chapter Four) turns toward the outward manifestations of worldview in Mahler's aesthetic values and compositional process. Specifically, I aim to determine how his aesthetic conviction that "the symphony must be like the world" corresponds to his actual practice as revealed in the composition of the Seventh Symphony. I will argue that the aesthetic values Mahler espoused directly relate to his deeply held ethical values, which also find

expression in the Seventh. The Epilogue concludes with an interpretation of the middle-period works as a symphonic trilogy, which communicate a coherent vision of the world through a narrative that unfolds over the course of the three works.

CHAPTER ONE

Worldview Hermeneutics

In his 1913 biography of Mahler, Richard Specht records an exchange with the composer that encapsulates many of the issues surrounding the topic of Mahler's worldview and its relationship to his compositions:

I recall that during a walk [Mahler] told me he knew that he was capable of reproducing in musical sounds his entire weltanschauung, his philosophic conception of life, as well as he could any feeling, natural process or landscape. . . . But he rejected any commentary, any program external to his symphonies; he wanted to address the feelings, not the reason, and he would rather be initially misunderstood than be understood merely rationally, let alone in terms of illustrating program music.¹

This quotation illustrates the crux of the problem for discussing the meaning of these symphonies. Mahler consistently described his works as vehicles for profound ideas, but beginning with the compositions of his middle period, he refused all programmatic explanations. Because of this, many scholars turn to researching Mahler's worldview as a means of decoding these complex works. Often, such investigations attempt to apply relevant religious and philosophical ruminations from the primary sources to an analysis of his symphonies, with varying degrees of success. Given the multitude of studies of this kind, spanning decades of research, the worldview issue remains as relevant now as ever. The following represents an effort to reframe the discussion, providing an alternative approach by answering first the question of

¹ Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler's Mental World: A Systematic Representation*, trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabish (Frankfurt am Main: PL Academic Research, 2016), 169.

how these works express Mahler's worldview before attempting to discern *what* that worldview might be.

Analyzing the middle-period symphonies under the rubric of worldview requires a firm theoretical groundwork upon which the case studies can rest. Laying such a foundation involves several steps. First, I will review the scholarly writing on Mahler's worldview to determine the status of the research. This involves noting similarities and differences between approaches, summarizing their assumptions and conclusions, and critiquing the methods employed. Second, this chapter will survey philosophical issues that surround the concept of worldview. After tracing the origins of this term and its development over time, the various perspectives on worldview will coalesce into a useful definition, one that will serve as a point of reference for the case studies. Third, I will attempt to articulate the precise nature of the connection between worldview and artistic expression. The presupposition that such a connection exists, frequently taken for granted, requires philosophical investigation. The final section will apply these reflections to musical analysis, articulating a methodology for the case studies that follow.

MAHLER'S WORLDVIEW IN THE SECONDARY LITERATURE

A Survey of Studies

Investigating Mahler's worldview presents an interesting challenge. The eclecticism of his intellectual interests complements the world-embracing aesthetic of his musical style, enticing scholars to draw connections between the two. Because of this, there exists an abundance of scholarly works surveying Mahler's philosophical, literary, and religious obsessions, from the earliest analyses of his contemporaries to the most recent biographies,

articles, and essays. A quick review of this large and diverse body of work will aid in this new attempt to take up the challenge. The following includes a representative selection of work—both older and more recent, extensive and concise—in order to elucidate the methodologies and conclusions found in this type of investigation.

As the first and only study of its scope, the first volume of Constantin Floros' three-part Mahler series, *Die geistige Welt Gustav Mahler in systematischer Darstellung* (recently translated as *Gustav Mahler's Mental World: A Systematic Representation*), merits attention. Published in 1977, this monograph remains the most wide-ranging and exhaustive study of Mahler's worldview to date. Floros begins with the polemical statement that, "[t]he starting point of the first volume is the realization that no well-grounded exegesis of Mahler's music is possible without a systematic exploration of his many-faceted spiritual-intellectual world."² Floros targets what he considers to be the main stream of Mahler research: the view of Mahler's symphonies as examples absolute music. To this he declares, "[t]he truth of the matter is that all of Mahler's symphonies, even the purely instrumental ones, are based on literary and philosophical programs that Mahler concealed or kept silent about."³ Seeking to rectify the wayward course of Mahler scholarship, Floros's project examines Mahler's intellectual and spiritual world to further the cause of interpreting Mahler's symphonies programmatically.

Floros takes as his premise the notion that, for Mahler, life and art exist inextricably from one another. The symphonies, therefore, represent an outgrowth of Mahler's inner world.⁴ Floros establishes a specific approach and defines the terms of his investigation:

In the present study, Mahler's *mental world* will for the first time be constructed on the basis of the sources: letters, oral statements, reports, memoirs and musical works. The

² Floros, *Gustav Mahler's Mental World*, 11.

³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

expression *intellectual* (or *spiritual*) *world* signifies the totality of the relations existing between Mahler's literary knowledge, religious and philosophical *weltanschauung*, aesthetics and symphonic conception. Whoever takes exception to this term, or regards it as dated, should consider that it is a coinage from Mahler's own time. It seems to denominate precisely what is to be delineated here.⁵

To support this claim, he cites the philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey, a contemporary of Mahler's, who first discussed and theorized *Weltanschauung* as an important aspect of human epistemology and psychology. Regarding the prevailing view of absolute music, Floros admits that statements of Mahler's contemporaries and some by Mahler himself tend to reinforce this position. He argues, however, that Mahler's comments, when examined closely, tell a different story. Floros explains, "[f]rom his utterances one can elicit the view that the notorious term [program music] means something essentially different to the composer than it does to the listener. Mahler regards 'inner programs' of masterpieces as self-evident. What he deems pernicious is . . . the publication of the programs."⁶ Floros supports this position with substantial primary-source evidence, weighing Mahler's statements on this subject with his actions regarding programs and programmatic interpretations of his works. Whether or not one is fully convinced, Floros indeed provides compelling support for his assertions.

Next, he establishes the significant influences on Mahler's worldview by focusing on the composer's education and interests. Floros lists several authors—set out chronologically from the earliest to most recent—representing a mix of literary and philosophical figures Mahler read and admired. These include Classical authors, Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Jean Paul, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Eichendorff, Hölderlin, Wagner (as an essayist), Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Ibsen, and Nietzsche, each with a brief indication of the influence that the writer exerted on Mahler's

⁵ Floros, *Gustav Mahler's Mental World*, 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*

intellectual development. Most importantly, Floros explores Mahler's relationship with Siegfried Lipiner, a figure whose friendship and influence on the composer previously was neglected in Mahler studies.

Floros's exploration of Mahler's worldview forms the centerpiece of this volume. He argues that a rigorous search for truth informed Mahler's entire existence, stating, "[a]ll his life, his prime interest was in metaphysical questions. They captivated and occupied him to such a degree that one can almost speak of a metaphysical agony. A thirst for metaphysical knowledge impelled him to the study of philosophic and scientific literature."⁷ Using primary sources, Floros attempts to reconstruct Mahler's belief system. First, he establishes Mahler's hostile attitude toward the materialistic worldview in its various forms, citing Friedrich Albert Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus* ("History of Materialism") as an important influence.⁸ He reproduces various statements made by Mahler concerning the topics of determinism, reincarnation, the transmigration of souls, and pantheism. Despite this complex web of diverging ideas, Floros ultimately argues that Mahler possessed a Christian worldview. Borrowing a term Alma used in her reminiscences, Floros describes Mahler, fundamentally, as *christgläubig*, a believer in Christ. He summarizes this conclusion, stating:

From his various pronouncements and the programs of his symphonies, one can gather that he believed in all the central proclamations of the Christian doctrine, especially those that establish the difference of that doctrine from other religions, that is, in Jesus Christ and his work of human redemption, the blessedness of God, Divine love and mercy, and the eschatological conceptions of Christianity, the Second Coming of Christ (*Parousia*), the Resurrection of the Flesh, the Last Judgment and the final division of the creation into Heaven and Hell.⁹

⁷ Floros, *Gustav Mahler's Mental World*, 102-3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 127-28.

The remainder of the monograph expounds on his initial thesis—the inherent connection between Mahler’s art and life—by turning to the symphonies and their autobiographical programs. In discussing Mahler’s aesthetics, Floros cites the influence of Schopenhauer and Wagner’s subsequent appropriation of his ideas. And yet he continues to affirm the view of the Christian Mahler, stating, “[t]he metaphysics in which Schopenhauer and Wagner locate their philosophy of music is an abstract one. The metaphysics Mahler has in mind, on the other hand, is more palpable. It is the religious, more specifically, the Christian-Catholic, that is to say, an eschatological metaphysics.”¹⁰ While no doubt a groundbreaking study, Floros’ narrow reading of Mahler’s worldview provoked several responses from critics seeking to expand the scholarly understanding of Mahler’s beliefs.

Jens Malte Fischer challenges the view of the Christian Mahler in his own biography of the composer. While he does not directly mention Floros’s work, Fischer most certainly alludes to him when he states, “[i]n spite of attempts by recent writers to turn Mahler into a Christian, doubts remain in order.”¹¹ Instead of embracing Alma Mahler’s account of her late husband, Fischer remains skeptical, noting Alma’s own religious bias during the period in which she wrote her memoir. Although both Alma’s account and primary sources confirm her status as a “free-thinker” when she met Mahler in 1901, Fischer points out that she did not always remain so. In fact, he observes, “when she wrote down her reminiscences and memoirs, she felt increasingly drawn to the Catholic Church.”¹² Thus, he recommends caution when approaching Alma’s account of Mahler’s beliefs.

¹⁰ Floros, *Gustav Mahler’s Mental World*, 159.

¹¹ Jens Malte Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, trans. Stewart Spencer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 392.

¹² *Ibid.*

Fischer also utilizes primary sources to formulate his alternate view, drawing from several reminiscences of persons close to Mahler (other than Alma). His main argument, however, rests on two significant letters that Mahler wrote to Alma in the later years of his life. Alma herself cited this first letter—written in 1910 during the preparations for the premiere of the Eighth Symphony—as an example of Mahler’s Christian beliefs. Fischer points out that a closer reading of its content reveals an ambiguity. In the letter, Mahler compares Plato to Christ, but this comparison neither emphasizes Christ’s divinity nor even his superiority. Fischer explains, “[f]ar from defending Christ again Plato, Mahler presents them both as equals and as two sides of the same coin, which is hardly the view of a Christian believer.”¹³ He continues:

Even more important is the opinion that he puts forward in a passage that precedes the one just quoted: the decisive element in Plato’s thinking, he argues, was subsumed by Goethe’s outlook on life, whereby all love is founded on procreation and creation, and procreation is an activity not only of the body but also of the soul. Nowhere was this better expressed than in the closing scene of *Faust*, Mahler’s own musical setting of which he was currently rehearsing in Munich. In short, Goethe was the authority who assimilated the ideas of both Plato and Christ and fashioned them in a way that was compelling philosophically and poetically. This certainly brings us much closer to Mahler’s own faith.¹⁴

Contrary to Alma, Fischer sees in this document the primacy of Mahler’s devotion to the philosophical ideas of Goethe, which, while involving elements of Christian belief and symbolism, exists well outside the bounds of orthodoxy.

Fischer emphasizes Mahler’s lack of dogmatism, observable in the accounts of those closest to him professionally and personally. Like Floros, he acknowledges Mahler’s rejection of materialism and references the influence of Lange’s *Geschichte des Materialismus*. Fischer also cites the thought of Gustav Theodor Fechner, whose name occasionally appears in Mahler’s

¹³ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 393.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

letters, as an integral aspect of Mahler's worldview. Furthermore, Fischer draws an important connection between Fechner and Goethe: "Fechner's ideas, which Mahler had got to know as a young man . . . were later combined with Goethe's even more crucial ideas on entelechy, a point that emerges with some force from an important letter that Mahler wrote to Alma in the summer of 1909."¹⁵ This second letter establishes that Mahler's reverence for Goethe as a philosophical thinker remained just as strong as for Goethe the poet. In this letter, Mahler interprets the closing scene from Goethe's *Faust II*, which he set to music in the second part of his Eighth Symphony three summers prior. Fischer suggests that Mahler's conception of Love emerged more directly from the *eros* found Goethe's famous scene than from *agape* in the Christian sense. He argues:

Mahler saw very clearly that this final scene in Goethe's vast drama was not grounded in the Christian religion. And if he set these lines to music in his Eighth Symphony, he did not do so in the spirit of Christianity. Mahler had come to Goethe through the natural philosophy of the Romantics and through his reading of Fechner and Lotze, and it was Goethe who had now shown him that it was possible to believe in the immortality of the soul and in redemption without being a Christian.¹⁶

While indeed Floros's systematic effort to uncover Mahler's worldview makes exhaustive use of the primary sources, Fischer maintains that one must check these sources against Mahler's known influences and a careful reading of their work. Thus, Fischer's biography provides what he sees as a course correction to the Christian view of Mahler, emphasizing instead his debt to Goethe and the philosophers that reinforced his poetic and intellectual ideas.

Two essays by Morten Solvik, published in close proximity, provide more recent examples of this type of examination. Due to the overlap in content between the first article, "Mahler's Untimely Modernism" (2005) and "The Literary and Philosophical Worlds of Gustav Mahler" (2007), I will synthesize their content into a single summary. Like Floros, Solvik prefers

¹⁵ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 397.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 406.

to use the term worldview to describe the totality of influences on Mahler. More so than the previous authors, however, Solvik examines Mahler's worldview in light of the culture and time period in which he lived. Instead of considering him as a product of his time, Solvik argues that Mahler's tastes demonstrate conservative, perhaps even reactionary, tendencies when compared to his contemporaries.¹⁷ Solvik also notes the influence of Christianity, but he ultimately concludes that, "[d]espite the religious overtones . . . it was not enough for him, for instance, simply to embrace the tenets of Christianity."¹⁸

Solvik gives special attention to the intellectual world of Mahler's student days, which he considers highly formative to his worldview. He describes the intellectual circle in which Mahler found himself:

In 1878 Mahler joined the so-called Pernerstorfer Circle, a group of young thinkers that promoted a pro-German blend of artistic idealism and social change. A few years later he co-founded the Saga Society, a gathering of friends whose activities included recitations of the *Nibelungenlied*, the *Edda*, and other German sagas. The mission of the Society emphasized living in the spirit of the German medieval hero in the hopes that a "new world view should come into being, an artistic, poetic one opposed to the modern scientific one" in the hopes of founding a "new and magnificent culture."¹⁹

In this environment, Mahler encountered the writings of Schopenhauer, Wagner's essays appropriating those ideas, and Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*—a work written during that particular author's early, Schopenhauerian-Wagnerian phase. Like Floros and Fischer, Solvik stresses Mahler's distaste for the materialistic worldview and his search for philosophers that might reinforce his own metaphysical conceptions. Unsurprisingly, Solvik points to the influence of Fechner, Lange's *Geschichte*, Hermann Lotze's *Mikrocosmos*, and the writings of Eduard

¹⁷ Morten Solvik, "Mahler's Untimely Modernism," in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham, 153-71 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 153.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁹ Solvik, "The Literary and Philosophical Worlds of Gustav Mahler," 23.

Hartmann. All of these serve as examples of Mahler's "untimely" worldview (Solvik's term) in an era dominated by devotees of materialism and enthusiastic recipients of the mature, anti-idealistic writings of Nietzsche.

This study also includes a list of significant literary influences, noting Mahler's apparent disinterest in contemporary writers. At the same time, Solvik points out a previously neglected aspect of Mahler's worldview, his interest in the latest scientific writings on a variety of topics. In this matter, Mahler did indeed join the culture of his time. Yet this fascination did not change his stance against materialism. Solvik explains that, "[w]hile science supposedly dealt with objective reality, Mahler saw no contradiction in framing the theories of the hard sciences in terms of an idealistic understanding of existence."²⁰ He does not suggest that Mahler stubbornly clung to these values in the face of a changing world. Rather, "Mahler searched for reassurance in the notion of a meaningful existence, that life had a distinct and higher purpose and that death represented nothing more than a transition. It was an assurance not easily won. For all the fervor of these philosophical and literary pursuits he remained deeply skeptical about ever finding an answer to his query."²¹ Solvik considers the symphonies to be an essential part of this struggle: "Mahler's compulsion to give an answer—to compose—in the face of such riddles forms a crucial component of his musical personality and intellectual make-up."²² Thus, while acknowledging the critique of Fischer, Solvik still arrives at the same conclusion as Floros: "[Mahler's] speculations as an intellectual were inextricably bound to his artistic activities in the common task of unravelling the essence of life itself."²³

²⁰ Solvik, "Mahler's Untimely Modernism," 168.

²¹ Solvik, "The Literary and Philosophical Worlds of Gustav Mahler," 22.

²² *Ibid.*, 23.

²³ *Ibid.*, 30.

On the surface, Georg Mohr's essay, "*Die Gedanken sind Frei!:* Gustav Mahler und die Philosophie seiner Zeit" ("Ideas are Free!: Gustav Mahler and the Philosophy of His Time"), does not stray very far from the ground covered already. It investigates Mahler's philosophical outlook, utilizing the same sources and citing the same philosophers and literary figures mentioned in the previous studies. But Mohr also interrogates the notion of Mahler as a "*Musiker-Philosophen*" ("musician-philosopher"), an idea which pervades both popular and academic writing on the composer.²⁴ He elaborates two variants of this idea found in the Mahler literature. The first views Mahler as immersed in philosophical writings and ideas, which enriched his intellectual life but remained somewhat separate from his creative output.²⁵ This perspective establishes Mahler as a musician with an enthusiasm for philosophy, but with minimal overlap between them. The second variant, however, posits the existence of an intimate connection between the musical and the philosophical. Therefore, philosophical statements form a part of Mahler's musical discourse: "Mahler's philosophical reflections are expressed *in* his music. Philosophy is *musically* symbolized."²⁶

To interrogate these perspectives, Mohr reviews the available evidence. First, he attempts to reconstruct a philosophical biography for Mahler with the aid of Jeremy Barham's catalogue of the surviving books of the Alma Mahler-Werfel collection.²⁷ While useful, this study cannot definitively account for all of Mahler's reading, and thus, Mohr concludes that a proper

²⁴ Georg Mohr, "*Die Gedanken sind Frei!:* Gustav Mahler und die Philosophie seiner Zeit," in *Mahler im Context/Contextualizing Mahler*, ed. Erich Wolfgang Partsch and Morten Solvik, 152-64 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), 68.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 69. "Mahlers philosophische Reflexionen kommen *in* seiner Musik zum Ausdruck, Philosophie wird *musikalisch* versinnbildlicht."

²⁷ See: Jeremy Barham, "Mahler the Thinker: The Books of the Alma Mahler-Werfel Collection," in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham, 37-152 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005).

reconstruction will always remain incomplete.²⁸ Next, Mohr turns to the contemporary accounts of Mahler's philosophical interests, producing a list of thinkers and writers, similar to those found in Floros, Fischer, and Solvik:

If we recapitulate these authors, the following list, in chronological order, is the result:
Plotinus, Spinoza, Immanuel Kant, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Jean Paul, Friedrich H[olderlin], E. T. A. Hoffmann, Arthur Schopenhauer, Gustav Theodor Fechner, Hermann Lotze, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Hermann Helmholtz, Friedrich Albert Lange, William James, Eduard von Hartmann, Friedrich Nietzsche, Johannes Reinke, and Henri Bergson.²⁹

Then, Mohr examines Mahler's own statements, as recorded by others, related to philosophical issues. He draws primarily from Natalie Bauer-Lechner's *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, which leads him to an interesting observation:

In view of the abundance of names of philosophers ascertained above from other sources, it is quite surprising that in the very rich memories of Natalie Bauer-Lechner—which also contain very detailed reflections on Mahler's musical aesthetics and quite detailed remarks by Mahler on his own works (up to the Fourth Symphony)—a philosopher is hardly mentioned.³⁰

Mohr explains this lack by noting that Bauer-Lechner's *Recollections* primarily focus on Mahler's statements about music (whether his own or others), mentioning philosophical questions only in relation to musical concerns.³¹ For this reason, Mohr casts doubt on the notion that philosophy constitutes Mahler's primary compositional concern. Turning to Mahler's letters themselves, Mohr provides supporting evidence for the claims of other sources, but he also finds fewer direct references to philosophers and philosophy than expected.³² Despite the occasional

²⁸ Mohr, "Die Gedanken sind Frei!," 74.

²⁹ Ibid., 77.

³⁰ Ibid., 78. "Angesichts der Fülle der oben aus anderen Quellen ermittelten Philosophennamen ist es einigermaßen überraschend, dass gerade in den sehr ergiebigen *Erinnerungen* Bauer-Lechners, die neben recht ausführlichen Kommentaren Mahlers zu eigenen Werken (bis zur *Vierten Symphonie*) auch sehr aufschlussreiche musikästhetische Reflexionen Mahlers enthalten, kaum ein Philosoph auch nur erwähnt wird."

³¹ Ibid., 79.

³² Ibid., 85.

reference, “it must be noted that, compared with the portrayals of contemporaries, who particularly emphasize the philosophical inclinations and knowledge of Mahler, the published letters rarely contain substantive remarks of Mahler on the philosophies he received.”³³

In the final section of his essay, Mohr discusses Mahler’s relationship with metaphysics and the empirical sciences, noting Mahler’s enthusiasm for reading about scientific developments and his need to reconcile the two disciplines.³⁴ Like Fischer, Mohr points to the influence of Fechner who, drawing from the traditions of Spinoza and Goethe, integrated a scientific approach with his metaphysical ruminations.³⁵ Similarly, Mohr references Lotze, Lange, and Hartmann, who also attempted to reconcile the scientific and the philosophical in their work.³⁶ Given these influences, Mohr concludes that, despite evaluations of Mahler’s intellectual reading as eclectic or conservative, “[t]he above-mentioned list of names is a good mixture of philosophical classics and a representative selection of current, partly academic, sometimes popular, philosophical texts.”³⁷ Most importantly, Mohr’s investigation paints a vivid picture of Mahler as a rigorous seeker of the transcendent through rational and scientific approaches. Returning to the issue of Mahler as *Musiker-Philosoph*, Mohr concludes that there does exist a philosophical component to Mahler’s music, but instead of regarding him as a “philosopher-in-music,” Mohr advocates a view—closer to Mahler’s own conception—of him as

³³ Mohr, “*Die Gedanken sind Frei!*,” 85. “Darüber hinaus ist festzustellen, das im Vergleich zu den Schilderungen der Zeitgenossen, die die philosophischen Neigungen und Kenntnisse Mahlers besonders hervorheben, in den veröffentlichten Briefen selten substantielle Ausführungen Mahlers zu den von ihm rezipierten Philosophen zu finden sind.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 88. “Die oben eruierte Namenliste ist eine gute Mischung aus Klassikern der Philosophie und einer repräsentativen Auswahl aus aktuellen, zum Teil wissenschaftlich-akademischen, zum Teil populären philosophischen Texten.”

a “musician-in-music.”³⁸ Although he did not compose philosophical statements in music, Mahler, in Mohr’s view, wrote music influenced by elements of philosophy that could readily find expression in musical terms: “metaphor, allegory, figurative-visionary elements” and, most importantly, “narrative.”³⁹ Thus, Mohr’s contribution to this collection of studies adds nuance to the attempts to draw connections between Mahler’s philosophical inclinations and musical output.

At this point, one might suspect that the topic of Mahler’s worldview has been fully explored and exhausted. Indeed, many scholars have discussed it, each highlighting certain aspects of Mahler’s intellectual world. While there remain some differences of opinion, many share common conclusions about the broader picture. A recent study by Jeremy Barham, however, reveals just how unsettled this topic remains. His essay, “‘Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens’: Mahler, the Politics of Reason and the Metaphysics of Spiritualism,” raises issues that remain unsolved:

Mahler’s relationship with, on the one hand, supposed rationalities and objectivities of contemporaneous science with their attendant issues of materialism and empiricism, and, on the other hand, supposed irrational and subjective qualities of art and religion with their attendant issues of metaphysics and speculative belief, is far from straightforward. In part this is because it is difficult to pinpoint precisely and to understand comprehensively the nature of Mahler’s belief system (assuming that it was stable and definitive in the first place) based on what are relatively scarce statements, hints and clues contained in his correspondence and gleaned from events in his life, or indeed inferred from his creative output; and in part this is also due to the immensely complex and ambiguous development of scientific and philosophical thought itself during the most exploratory and conflicted of historical periods, the nineteenth century.⁴⁰

³⁸ Mohr, “*Die Gedanken sind Frei!*,” 89.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Jeremy Barham, “‘Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens’: Mahler, the Politics of Reason and the Metaphysics of Spiritualism,” in *Naturlauf: Scholarly Journeys Toward Gustav Mahler*, ed. Paul-André Bempéchat, 73-112 (New York: Peter Lang, 2016), 73.

While Barham does not target a specific scholar or work, one can easily observe the thinly veiled critique of Floros or, at least, projects that heavily depend on primary sources to determine Mahler's worldview:

At our peril we make assumptions and generalizations, however, and forget that Mahler was a layman in philosophy and science, as well as a living, breathing human being susceptible to change, development, indecision, and misunderstanding in his search for knowledge among the intellectual currents of his day, intermeshed as this was with predispositions formed during an upbringing that was socio-culturally ambivalent in some ways, yet narrowly demarcated in others.⁴¹

Out of this call for complexity, Barham's essay probes an ambiguity in Mahler's thought, revealed in a letter to Alma from 1 April 1903. In the letter, Mahler refers to an article called "Der Kampf gegen die Dummheit" ("The Fight against Stupidity"), written by an anonymous author in the *Berliner Tagblatt*, which Barham reproduces in translation. The article details a recent verdict in a case against a psychic medium, capitalizing on the event to attack, in the author's view, the problematic nature of a belief in spiritualism, occultism, and, more broadly, religion. The hostility of the author toward belief in the supernatural would, at first, seem antithetical to Mahler's deeply held convictions. And yet, Mahler expresses sympathy and agreement with the article, railing against spiritualism in the same manner as its author.

To account for this discrepancy, Barham explores the socio-political and intellectual climate in which Mahler read and responded to this article:

The changing relationships between political trends of nationalism, pan-Germanism, Socialism and Liberalism, and intellectual trends of empiricism, positivism, idealism and religiosity in the Austro-German orbit at this time are not straightforward, and neither is Mahler's location in amongst all these interlocking social-cultural currents.⁴²

⁴¹ Barham, "Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens," 74.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 86.

The straightforward explanations of prior investigations do not satisfy the complexities involved with this document. But Barham believes that by contextualizing the article and Mahler's response to it, a more accurate picture, if not necessarily a more cohesive one, may emerge: "Mahler's endorsement of this article's appeal to the overarching power of a nationally assumed rationality can be seen as a late symptom of the broader subtle shift during the last two decades of the century towards coupling the aspiration to reason more and more with the adoption of specifically German middle-class, *bürgerlich* cultural traits."⁴³ Despite his Bohemian origins, Mahler always embraced an Austro-German identity. During his student years, Mahler even "dabbled in radical pan-Germanism," which coincided with his enthusiasm for Wagner. Mahler eventually withdrew from the movement as it became increasingly anti-Semitic.⁴⁴ As Barham points out, however, while Mahler "had clear German nationalist tendencies which went hand in hand with the *völkisch* anti-Semitism of his generation," he also respected the more Liberal-leaning reverence for "the central pillars of German literary and philosophical culture (Goethe, Schiller, Kant)."⁴⁵

Mahler's worldview becomes more convoluted when considering his adherence to both radical and traditional values. Barham argues that his dichotomy finds its way into his music:

[H]e venerated the progressive in Beethoven and Wagner but also the "traditional" in Mozartian classicism and Bach, and composed music influenced by all of these in addition to the non-German and ethnically flavored opera and orchestral repertoire he conducted and folk music he remembered, music and exhibited traits of extreme emotional expression and angst alongside the most carefully wrought distributed polyphony and counterpoint.⁴⁶

⁴³ Barham, "Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens," 87.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

This mixture of ideologies coincides with the shifting political terrain of Vienna in the late nineteenth century. Barham explains how, in the final years of the century, traditional Austrian Liberalism transformed into a radical brand of nationalism. At the same time, the Pernerstorfer circle, which Mahler involved himself with during the 1870s, became “the matured version of a youthful anti-Liberal radicalism, divested of its generational tension. Its humanist vision was centered on the tenets of law, the modernizing of education and the transformative influence of art—some of the left-Liberal, progressive-Socialist sentiments that went hand in hand with anti-clericalism as expressed in ‘Der Kampf gegen die Dummheit.’”⁴⁷ Mahler found himself caught in the crossfire of these changing ideologies and values, and Barham sees this reflected in Mahler’s compositions in the way he strives toward “managing a pluralism built on degrees of assimilation to an imagined center and putative shared goals—a kind of natural tendency to stability that concealed its implicit hierarchies, assumed its own empirical justification, and contended with persistent possibilities of disintegration and collapse.”⁴⁸

The remainder of Barham’s essay treads similar ground to the studies already discussed. He stresses Mahler’s interest in contemporary science, seemingly at odds with his Idealistic philosophical leanings (although not so in Mohr’s opinion). In the letter to Alma that served as the jumping-off point of Barham’s study, Mahler also mentions Helmholtz, whose work he clearly admired. Like the author of “Der Kampf gegen die Dummheit,” Helmholtz held empiricist views, directly opposed to spirituality. The kind of idealism Mahler embraced—a lineage of thinkers beginning with Kant—held that science may convincingly explain phenomena in the physical world, but there remains a realm inaccessible to its reach. Mahler

⁴⁷ Barham, “Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens,” 90-91.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

could carve out a place for his own worldview and its expression in the space between hard science and Idealistic philosophy. Barham notes this common theme in Mahler's intellectual and cultural context:

Scientists, philosophers, and artists all confronted the unknown and gave expression to it in different ways. It seemed to boil down to a choice—determined by the extent of one's education and skill set, and by the flavor of one's religious conviction—of whether or to what degree to admit the limits of one's explanatory or expressive endeavor, and ascribe what remained to hypotheses, speculations, logical theories and denials, clothed in varying hues of creative, scientific, theistic, spiritualist or metaphysical efforts of imagination.⁴⁹

Mahler's disdain for the spiritualism and occultism discussed in the *Berliner Tagblatt* article stemmed from the fact that, “[f]or Mahler and others the work of mediums constituted a scandalously unacceptable short-cut to the beyond, but at the same time, together with scientific advances, it made claims of the unknowability of the metaphysical essence of existence seem all the more like a desperate retreat into an argument of last resort.”⁵⁰ In the end, Mahler's endorsement of the article does cohere with our general understanding of his worldview. Far from neatly wrapping up this problem, however, Barham points to further contradictions in Mahler's thought and behavior. Instead of a complete rejection of spiritualism, Mahler knew, supported, and admired several individuals (known both personally or through their writing) who aligned themselves with spiritualism of one variety or another. It seems, then, that every attempt to establish Mahler's worldview concretely will always remain speculative and incomplete due to the complexities and contradictions of the man himself.

⁴⁹ Barham, “Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens,” 98.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

General Conclusions from the Survey

With the survey now complete, I will draw some conclusions about the approaches of these authors. One immediately notices the enduring scholarly interest in Mahler's worldview. Not only did Mahler's contemporaries find his beliefs of enough significance to record his philosophical statements, literary obsessions, and ideas, but even now, the secondary literature continues to draw from the well of Mahler's worldview to better our understanding of his life and work. Of the five studies discussed, four of them come from the last twenty years, two of those from within this decade. Of course, this does not begin to account for the myriad of other Mahler-related studies where worldview plays a supplementary role. Investigations of the primary sources provide a fairly clear, if perhaps still general, portrait of Mahler's literary, philosophical, and scientific interests. A broad characterization of these influences points to three observable traits of Mahler's "mental world": (1) Mahler's literary interests constitute the most conservative aspect of his intellectual world, consisting mostly of early Romantic writers and poets, with a few exceptions; (2) his philosophical interests relate almost exclusively to German Idealism (with Nietzsche forming a notable exception), beginning with his involvement in the Pernerstorfer Circle and Siegfried Lipiner and continuing throughout his life; and (3) Mahler's interest in the developments of science reflects one of the only aspects of his worldview in dialogue with his own era, taking recent findings and attempting to reconcile them with his philosophical beliefs. These studies consistently reinforce these basic conclusions and provide a foundation for understanding the influences on Mahler's worldview.

Methodologies for investigating this topic coalesce around the approach of Floros, while deviating from his conclusions. His systematic investigation of the primary sources forms the basis for the studies of the other authors, who often cite the same sources and quotations. While

the thoroughness of Floros's work remains unmatched, those that followed him used precisely the same formula to challenge or, at least, expand his conclusions. Additionally, these authors adopt the basic assumption about the profound connection between Mahler's worldview and creative output. Although Mohr interrogates this notion more critically than others, his conclusions continue to reinforce this idea. Most importantly, one can easily observe that the scholarly picture of Mahler's worldview gradually increases in complexity while, simultaneously, decreasing in certainty. Floros presents a simple and synthesized version of Mahler's worldview that, subsequently, becomes more complicated and less unified in other studies. Fischer challenges Floros' presentation of Mahler as a Christian, Solvik situates Mahler within his context as a reader and thinker, Mohr points out the problem with synthesizing Mahler's scant statements on philosophy into a singular vision, and Barham elucidates an ambiguity in Mahler's thinking between the mystical and the empirical within the shifting politics of Mahler's day. Thus, each study adds to the wealth of information on this topic, which only seems to create difficulties for the project of reconstructing Mahler's worldview.

Problems with These Approaches

Out of the survey emerges an opening for criticism and for the suggestion of an alternate path. The following identifies four areas where a new approach could point the way forward for this type of research. First, there remains a need for terminological precision, specifically in the use of the term "worldview." Floros goes the farthest toward clarifying his use of "worldview," situating it in Mahler's historical context. Some scholars use it loosely and somewhat interchangeably with related terms such as philosophy, religion, and intellectual or spiritual world, while others avoid it altogether. None of these variations presents a major difficulty, but

interrogating the notion of worldview as an idea may hold some utility. This becomes particularly evident when these studies attempt to connect Mahler's worldview (or any other relative term) to his creative output.

The second area addresses the scope of these investigations. While Floros provides the most substantial work, probing further into a variety of issues related to Mahler's worldview, the majority of these studies consist of relatively brief articles and essays that explore only a small portion of this potentially vast research field. Although the accumulation of these treatments adds up to a greater whole when taken together, the modest scale of these studies prevents the emergence of a deeper understanding of this topic. The mere listing of philosophers or literary figures, along with a brief summary of their basic ideas, cannot do justice to the profundity of their contributions to Mahler's worldview.

The third area, directly related to the issue of scope, is that of synthesis. The lists of philosophers and authors, often presented as equally relevant to Mahler's worldview and creative life, actually comprise highly variable and not always congruous views of the world. For example, scholars frequently cite the importance of both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche for Mahler, but their obvious metaphysical and ethical disagreements rarely factor into the discussion of Mahler's reception of their work. Often, no attempt is made to synthesize or determine a hierarchy of importance among the figures of in Mahler's intellectual world. On the other hand, attempts to synthesize these influences into a coherent worldview may overreach by glossing over the complexities involved. This certainly relates to the critical responses to Floros's project, and Barham, in particular, warns against this pitfall.

Vladimír Karbusický's essay, "Gustav Mahler's Musical Jewishness," demonstrates the seriousness of this problem. He notes the tendency, specifically among German scholars, to

downplay the Jewish aspect of Mahler's identity and its influence on his music. He specifically names Floros and his presentation of Mahler as a "German with a Christian soul, a 'Jewish Christian,'" when in fact, Mahler retained an ongoing relationship with his Jewish identity.⁵¹ Karbusický highlights Mahler's enthusiasm for works by Jewish composers, observes "Hasidic-Yiddish" features in his music, and specifies the Jewish eschatological elements of the Second Symphony (often interpreted in purely Christian terms).⁵² He raises a number of valid points, but the whole truth, once again, rests in finding the correct synthesis of the Christian and Jewish elements of Mahler's worldview. One can understand that German-language scholarship of the post-war era avoided marking the Jewish aspects of Mahler's music in light of the Nazi's reception of Mahler among other Jewish composers—an issue addressed in an essay by Karen Painter within the very same volume as the discussion by Karbusický.⁵³ But the broader issue still stands: a proper synthesis should examine and reconcile the differences found in his reading, consider the issue of identity from multiple angles, and avoid obscuring the complexity of Mahler's worldview.

The fourth and final critique concerns the application of these studies. As demonstrated by the approaches surveyed, investigations into Mahler's worldview usually find their end in putting forward particular programmatic interpretations of his works. This occurs in a predictable formula: (1) interrogation of primary sources connecting Mahler to a specific thinker; (2) brief exposition of said thinker's basic ideas; and (3) application of those ideas to an interpretation. Examples of this method abound in the Mahler literature. Catherine Keller follows this formula

⁵¹ Vladimír Karbusický, "Gustav Mahler's Musical Jewishness," in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. and trans. Jeremy Barham, 195-216 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 195.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 198.

⁵³ Karen Painter, "Jewish Identity and Anti-Semitic Critique in the Austro-German Reception of Mahler, 1900-1945," in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham, 175-94 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005).

quite closely in her examination of the Third Symphony. After establishing Mahler's connection to the philosophy of Fechner through the influence of Lipiner, Keller describes Fechner's animism and his view of the soul-life of plants, which she applies to an interpretation of the second movement.⁵⁴ She convincingly establishes the connection with Fechner and pursues its consequences in interesting ways, but the scope of her study leaves important questions unanswered. The significance of these ideas for the entire Third symphony and how the animist concept fits into Mahler's broader worldview remain unexplored. I do not suggest that this represents an invalid approach. Many essays of this type produce thought-provoking views of these works. But overall, they do not illuminate the deep connections between Mahler's worldview and his compositions.

Another example comes from a survey of Mahler's middle-period works by Stephen Hefling, who links them to the ideas of multiple philosophers. In discussing Mahler's use of Friedrich Rückert's poetry in the works of this period, Hefling points to a letter in which Mahler compares Rückert to Fechner.⁵⁵ He also discusses the influence of Schopenhauer, seen in the withdrawn, often pessimistic tone of the *Rückert-Lieder*.⁵⁶ Hefling invokes both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in his discussions of the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Symphonies, but does not attempt to reconcile or evaluate their significant philosophical differences. Of course, the purpose of Hefling's exposition of the middle period does not explicitly include an investigation of worldview, but the reference to philosophical influences does, implicitly, bring the issue of

⁵⁴ Catherine Keller, "The Luxuriating Lily: Fechner's Cosmos in Mahler's World," in *Mahler im Context/Contextualizing Mahler*, ed., Erich Wolfgang Partsch and Morten Solvik, 152-64 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011) 153, 155, 156.

⁵⁵ Stephen E. Hefling, "Song and Symphony (II). From *Wunderhorn* to *Rückert* and the middle-period symphonies: vocal and instrumental works for a new century," in *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham, 89-104 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 109.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

Mahler's worldview into question. The lack of clarity on this issue allows for the appropriation of Mahler's works for interpretations stemming from multiple philosophical ideas, from differing authors, and without attempting to reconcile them into a coherent (or at least comprehensive) worldview.⁵⁷

Generally speaking, the issue of application speaks to a larger problem of hermeneutical methodology. The predictable formula, outlined above, demonstrates an *eisegetic* approach.⁵⁸ Still, there remains some utility in this type of study as a foray into how specific works might demonstrate aspects of Mahler's worldview. But it does not prove an effective means of tackling the issue of worldview and expression on a broader level. Therefore, given these areas of critique, a need exists for an alternative strategy, one which will perhaps yield new and interesting results.

Proposal for a New Approach

The following investigation of Mahler's worldview will begin by defining "worldview" philosophically and historically, discussing the origin and use of the term in order to arrive at a useful definition. Next, a determination needs to be made as to the exact nature of the connection between worldview and art. This assumption needs both a philosophical grounding and a greater degree of specificity as to the relationship between these domains. Subsequently, this investigation will lead toward a music-specific application by answering the question: how can an understanding of worldview and its relationship to artistic expression be applied to musical

⁵⁷ In reference to the critique of Floros, the attempt at reconciliation may go too far, but any consideration of an artist's worldview should begin with the presumption of its fundamental coherence and abandon that view only when the synthesis becomes logically untenable.

⁵⁸ *Eisegesis* refers to the practice of reading a work given an *a priori* interpretation. In other words, one begins with an interpretive presupposition that is subsequently read into the work.

analysis? After answering this question, the case studies that follow this chapter will turn toward the analysis of Mahler's middle-period symphonies with a hermeneutic approach of *exegesis*—that is, the extraction of an emergent meaning from a text, instead of reading meaning into it *a priori* (as in *eisegesis*). By studying how these works create meaning—before turning to the question of what they mean—one can then draw connections between Mahler's works and his worldview. Only then, at this late stage, can one overcome the problems inherent in previous approaches.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WORLDVIEW: TOWARDS A DEFINITION

Kant and the Idealists

To comprehend the significance of “worldview,” this investigation begins with the first utterance of the term. Martin Heidegger, in an effort to define worldview for his own philosophical purposes, details a short history of its initial appearance and use:

The word “Weltanschauung” is of specifically German coinage; it was in fact coined within philosophy. It first turns up in its natural meaning in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*—world-intuition in the sense of contemplation of the world given to the senses or, as Kant says, the *mundus sensibilis*—a beholding of the world as simple apprehension of nature in the broadest sense.⁵⁹

Similarly, David K. Naugle, in his study of worldview, declares that among philologists, “there is virtually universal recognition that this notable Prussian philosopher coined the term *Weltanschauung*.”⁶⁰ From the start, worldview formed a part of the philosophical school of

⁵⁹ Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, rev. ed., trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982), 4.

⁶⁰ David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans, 2002), 58. While Naugle's theological purpose utilizes a narrow application of the worldview concept, his thorough scholarship concerning the term's history is instrumental for the historical reconstruction found in this chapter.

Idealism. Its meaning in this context, however, differs significantly from the common understanding the term would later acquire. The Kantian passage in question conveys a more straightforward and practical use:

If the human mind is nonetheless to *be able even to think* the given infinite without contradiction, it must have within itself a power that is supersensible, whose idea of the noumenon cannot be intuited but can yet be regarded as the substrate underlying what is mere appearance, namely, our intuition of the world [*Weltanschauung*]. For only by means of this power and its idea do we, in a pure intellectual estimation of magnitude, comprehend the infinite in the world of sense *entirely under* a concept, even though in a mathematical estimation of magnitude *by means of numerical concepts* we can never think it in its entirety.⁶¹

Worldview, in this sense, means quite simply the ability to perceive the world, an ability shared among all persons given common faculties of sense perception. Heidegger observes that, within this narrow meaning, the term appears in the writings of Goethe and Alexander von Humboldt.⁶²

The transformation of the meaning of *Weltanschauung* paralleled the transformation of Kant's philosophy by the Idealist thinkers that followed him. Kant's three *Critiques* brought severe charges against previous metaphysical formulations by setting firm boundaries around philosophy's reach. In spite of this, philosophers that followed him sought to build upon his so-called "Copernican Revolution" in thought, and as Michael Ermarth notes, "[b]y turning portions of Kant's thought against other portions, they wound up reviving many of the ideas which he had laid to rest or placed beyond the scope of human knowledge"; thus, "Idealism after Kant assumed what is often loosely referred to as its 'romantic' form."⁶³ Likewise, the meaning of worldview became romanticized. According to Heidegger, its original usage disappeared during the 1830s, supplanted by a new conception in the thought of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von

⁶¹ Naugle, *Worldview*, 58-59.

⁶² Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 4.

⁶³ Michael Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey: The Critique of Historical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 43.

Schelling. He explains, “[h]ere Weltanschauung is directly assigned not to sense-observation but to intelligence, albeit to unconscious intelligence . . . Schelling speaks of a schematism of Weltanschauung, a schematism formed for the different possible world-views which appear to take shape in fact.”⁶⁴ Schelling’s contemporary, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, constitutes another key figure in this romantic turn. Discussing this shift, Ermarth states, “Schleiermacher put great stress upon the category of individuality in his theory of mind and other aspects of his philosophy,” and this subjective individuality manifests itself in differing worldviews; likewise for Schelling, “[t]he human individual pursues his own particular view of the world and unique manner of conducting himself in it, though he is still in a relation of harmonious dependency with the whole.”⁶⁵ Thus, both philosophers develop a conception of worldview as a mental faculty, but there remains disagreement as to whether this view of the world occurs unconsciously or as part of the individual’s calling toward self-realization.

In the totalizing philosophical system of G. F. W. Hegel, worldview forms a part of his thesis of the Absolute. Frederick Copleston provides a helpful summary of his basic ideas:

The Absolute is . . . the Totality, the whole of reality; and this totality is a process. In other words, the Absolute is a process of self-reflection: reality comes to know itself. And it does so through the human spirit. . . . In the sphere of human consciousness the Absolute returns to itself, that is, as Spirit. And the philosophical reflection of humanity is the Absolute’s self-knowledge. That is to say, the history of philosophy is the process by which the Absolute, reality as a whole, comes to think of itself.⁶⁶

Worldview plays a role in this process. This temporal unfolding involves the existence of diverging “forms of consciousness,” or worldviews. For Hegel, a worldview “carries the force of

⁶⁴ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 5. Clarifying the notion of unconscious intelligence, Heidegger explains this as “productivity,” meaning “the independent formative process of intuition.” In other words, Schelling puts forward a notion of worldviews as unconsciously created products of intuition.

⁶⁵ Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, 45.

⁶⁶ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, *Modern Philosophy: From the Post-Kantian Idealists to Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 171.

practical perspective on life, a conscious attitude that is permeated with the tension of moral concern and obligation.”⁶⁷ In his *Philosophy of History*, Hegel expounds on this idea, noting the existence of worldview on multiple levels. Not only do worldviews exist for individuals, they exist collectively in the contexts of a religious outlook, a national identity, or within a broader historical period.⁶⁸ Hegel takes care to differentiate between philosophy and worldview. Naugle explains, “[p]hilosophy as the chief discipline must elucidate its own nature, explain its connection with worldview, and articulate the relationship between worldviews and religion.”⁶⁹ Unlike philosophy, a worldview does not require rigorous intellectual interrogation. Rather, it proceeds naturally from an individual’s context and forms the basis for a person’s religious and philosophical convictions.

Worldview for Mahler’s Philosophers

Moving forward in the history of *Weltanschauung*, one should account for the philosophical treatments of worldview from thinkers associated with Mahler. Arthur Schopenhauer’s philosophy—which proved particularly influential on Wagner and, thus, for the musical world impacted by his music dramas and essays—does not develop an explicit concept of worldview. But his discussion of mankind’s inherent need for metaphysics does enter this territory. According to his view:

If our life were without end and free from pain, it would possibly not occur to anyone to ask why the world exists, and why it does so in precisely this way, but everything would be taken purely as a matter of course. In keeping with this, we find that the interest

⁶⁷ Naugle, *Worldview*, 69, 70.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

inspired by philosophical and also religious systems has its strongest and essential point absolutely in the dogma of some future existence after death.⁷⁰

This need to answer the challenge of death and pain leads toward metaphysical formulations.

Schopenhauer believes the systems created in response to this dilemma take two forms: “the first kind require reflection, culture, leisure, and judgment for the recognition of their credentials, they can be accessible only to an extremely small number of persons”; and, he continues, “[t]he systems of the second kind, on the other hand, are exclusively for the great majority of people who are not capable of thinking but only of believing, and are susceptible not to arguments, but only to authority.”⁷¹ Schopenhauer characterizes the first view as philosophy (requiring thought and conviction) and the other as religion (which provides an allegorical understanding of truth but is often held literally by its adherents). Yet here, it seems that Schopenhauer does not refer to religion in the strictest sense, but rather, any ideology providing a dogmatic view of the world.⁷²

One may extrapolate that Schopenhauer makes a distinction between the *discipline* of philosophy and the *disposition* of worldview:

I cannot, as is generally done, put the *fundamental difference* of all religions in the question whether they are monotheistic, polytheistic, pantheistic or atheistic, but only in the question whether they are optimistic or pessimistic, in other words, whether they present the existence of this world as justified by itself, and consequently praise and commend it, or consider it as something which can be conceived only as the consequence of our guilt, and thus really ought not to be, in that they recognize that pain and death cannot lie in the eternal, original, and immutable order of things, that which in every respect ought to be.⁷³

Put another way, metaphysical systems of the second type (which could stand for the notion of worldview) fundamentally do not consist of doctrines but, rather, of dispositions toward

⁷⁰ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 2, trans. E. J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1958), 161.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 166.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 170.

existence. Of course, philosophies find themselves affected by such dispositional attitudes, but generally, Schopenhauer holds philosophy in a separate and superior position to competing worldviews.

Despite the movement away from idealism and toward materialism around mid-century, the *fin de siècle* saw a resurgence of interest in Kant, which produced attempts to reconcile scientific advances with metaphysical questions. Friedrich Albert Lange's *History of Materialism and Criticism of Its Present Importance* formed an important part of the Neo-Kantian movement (and of Mahler's thought, as argued by several scholars mentioned above). Ermarth explains, "Lange had employed Kant's critical method to show that general philosophies of materialism and naturalism were as guilty of transgressing the proper bounds of human knowledge as the long-discredited systems of speculative idealism. By attempting to grasp the world 'as a whole,' these thought-systems ended up as metaphysical constructions or sheer 'poetizing in concepts' (*Begriffsdichtung*)."⁷⁴ Both systems, idealistic and materialistic, fell victim to the pitfalls of synthetic and totalizing ideologies, which belong instead to the realm of worldview: "Lange concluded his critical blast at materialist metaphysics with a sharp separation between the realm of certain scientific knowledge and the realm of personal ideals of life; *Wissenschaft* and *Weltanschauung* must forever remain cast in eternal opposition."⁷⁵

And yet, worldviews remain necessary. As Lange points out, "[o]ne thing is certain, that man needs to supplement reality by an ideal world of his own creation, and that the highest and noblest functions of his mind co-operate in such creations."⁷⁶ With the supplementation of

⁷⁴ Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, 79.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁷⁶ Friedrich Albert Lange, *The History of Materialism and Criticism of Its Present Importance*, 3rd ed., vol. 2, trans. Ernest Chester Thomas (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1950), 342.

worldview, an individual's creation of an ideal world emerges through an act of synthesis, just as it does in the idealistic and materialistic systems: "[t]he unity which makes the facts into a science and the sciences into a system is a product of free synthesis, and springs therefore from the same source as the creation of the ideal."⁷⁷ Therefore, according to Lange, worldviews provide answers to the questions that science cannot, but these answers do not in any sense constitute certainty about the world as it actually exists. Therefore, idealistic and materialistic systems manifest examples of *Weltanschauung* rather than *Wissenschaft* due to their synthetic and totalizing tendencies.

Of the philosophers Mahler read, Nietzsche perhaps said the most on the subject of worldview. Similar to Schopenhauer and Lange, Nietzsche held a critical view of worldview's ability to articulate reality. Schopenhauer held up philosophy as a rigorous search for truth while worldviews (he uses the term "religion") hold an inferior position founded on belief. Lange called into question any totalizing system, including the naturalist/materialist thesis, as a synthetic worldview. But Nietzsche radicalizes this even further: "[f]or Nietzsche there is no single Truth—that indeed was the greatest and most pervasive lie of all—but only the many truths that man himself creates. Indeed there is no absolute 'truth in itself'; rather, only interpretations rooted in life."⁷⁸ This view, known as perspectivism, may initially seem a forerunner to postmodern relativism. As Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins explain, however, Nietzsche "rejected the notion of truth and insisted on the importance of interpretation not in order to undermine science but rather because he agreed with its empiricist aims and

⁷⁷ Lange, *The History of Materialism and Criticism of Its Present Importance*, vol. 2, 342.

⁷⁸ Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, 86.

methods.”⁷⁹ On the other hand, Nietzsche maintains that “[a]nything we do know we know from a certain perspective, and that perspective depends on our physiological constitution, our skills of inquiring and interpreting, our culture, and our language.”⁸⁰

Therefore, all ideologies—scientific, religious, poetic, or moral—constitute worldviews, which arise from an interpretation of reality filtered through particular perspectives. While some worldviews might prove more useful than others, in Nietzsche’s view, none of them possesses a monopoly on truth itself. He states this clearly in his rumination on nihilism in *The Will to Power*, a posthumous publication of his notebooks:

Presupposition of this hypothesis: that there is no truth, that there is no absolute nature of things nor a “thing-in-itself.” This, too, is merely nihilism—even the most extreme nihilism. It places the value of things precisely in the lack of any reality corresponding to these values and in their being merely a symptom of strength on the part of the value-positers, a simplification for the sake of life.⁸¹

Values, a cornerstone of what constitutes a worldview, are merely simplifications. This recalls Lange’s notion of synthesis, wherein one reduces the complexity of the world into something coherent, if incomplete. This reductive simplification and synthesizing process, according to Nietzsche, only provides an interpretation of the world. He declares: “[a]gainst positivism, which halts at phenomena—‘There are only *facts*’—I would say: No, facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact ‘in itself’: perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing. . . . It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against.”⁸² Prevailing systems of values and interpretations merely demonstrate power on the part of those

⁷⁹ Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins, *What Nietzsche Really Said* (New York: Schocken Books, 2000), 42-43.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁸¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 14.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 267.

propagating such views. Thus, in Nietzsche's thought, worldviews both ascend in prevalence and descend in significance.

Dilthey and Later Developments

Until the end of the nineteenth century, worldview did not constitute an area of systematic study. Naugle points out, however, that “[w]hen *Weltanschauung* had reached its zenith in popularity in both common and academic discourse around the turn of the twentieth century, it finally began to receive noteworthy attention.”⁸³ A significant contribution came from Wilhelm Dilthey, whose treatment of this subject articulates how worldviews form, elucidates their structure, and explains their significance for the individual. Like Nietzsche, Dilthey viewed competing metaphysical philosophies—what he called “the conflict of systems”—as evidence of their ultimate failure to provide answers to the questions of life: “[w]e look back on an immense field of ruined religious traditions, metaphysical claims and demonstrated systems; for many centuries the human spirit has tried out and examined various ways of explaining the pattern of things scientifically, describing it poetically or proclaiming it religiously.”⁸⁴ But the problem or enigma of life remains. Ermarth explains, “Dilthey maintained that the process of living requires an over-arching orientation or interpretation . . . A person is drawn to make sense of his own existence and surroundings by synthesizing his experience into a coherent whole.”⁸⁵ Worldviews serve this need by providing the means by which one answers these questions of life.

⁸³ Naugle, *Worldview*, 56.

⁸⁴ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. H. P. Rickman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 134.

⁸⁵ Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, 324.

Dilthey argues that worldview begins with the individual's disposition toward the world as pessimistic or optimistic, stating:

Such attitudes toward life, the innumerable nuances of responses to the world, form the lower stratum for the formation of world-views. These try to solve the enigma of life on the basis of the experiences in which the individual's varied relationships of life are reflected. In the higher forms of world-views one procedure is particularly prominent—understanding something which cannot be grasped as it is given to us by means of something more distinct. What is distinct becomes a means of understanding or basis for explanation of the incomprehensible. . . . Wherever religion, myth, poetry or spontaneous metaphysics seek to illuminate and impress they do so by these same procedures.⁸⁶

Worldviews, therefore, offer symbols as a means to grasp what remains out of reach. Systems of belief, along with artistic expressions, utilize the standing-for function of symbols to articulate difficult or abstract conceptions of reality. While worldviews arise out of an individual's subjective experience, they also stem from historical and cultural circumstances. Ermarth clarifies, "no world-view is wholly individual, for it is constituted in relation with other persons and other world-views."⁸⁷ Similarly to Schelling, Dilthey argues that worldviews exist, at least partially, on the unconscious level, and this represents the most significant departure between a worldview and a philosophical or religious outlook:

It is not purely theoretical, scientific, or "philosophical" in character; it is not constructed like an argument or hypothesis—though it is not therefore irrational. It contains unconscious attitudes and deep presuppositions, but these are not wholly inaccessible, since lived experience is permeated by incipient elements of silent thought and reflection. The world-view unites different levels of meaning and integrates different aspects of experience.⁸⁸

Ermarth clarifies this further, stating, "whereas science 'explains' the world analytically, the world-view 'understands' the world synthetically, seeking to give a more general meaning to our

⁸⁶ Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, 137.

⁸⁷ Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, 326.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 325.

life in the world.”⁸⁹ Therefore, Dilthey provides a helpful distinction that separates worldview from other concepts associated with it.

After defining worldview in these terms, Dilthey theorizes the structure of worldviews, which, while variable in content, remain consistent in form:

All world-views, if they seek a complete solution of the enigma of life, invariably contain the same structure. This structure always takes the form of a system in which questions about the meaning and significance of the world are answered in terms of a conception of the world. From this ideal, a highest good and supreme principles of conduct are deduced.⁹⁰

Worldviews, according to this schema, consists of three elements that build upon one another.

The experience of the world, along with the attitudes formed out of those experiences, constitutes the foundation upon which these three stages rest. The first stage, then, derived from judgements about the world through experience, involves an individual’s formation of a picture of the world (*Weltbild*), which, as Naugle explains, “is a depiction of what is, a set of concepts and judgments that adequately capture ‘the relatedness and true being of reality.’”⁹¹ From this mental picture arises the second stage, where the individual forms value judgements around objects, people, and other phenomena, so that, as Dilthey claims, “circumstances, people and things receive a meaning in relation to the whole of reality and this whole itself acquires significance.”⁹² While these two stages represent the lower level of consciousness in the formation of worldviews, the third stage rises to its upper level where “the highest ideals, the greatest good, and the supreme principles for the conduct of life which imbue a *Weltanschauung* with vitality and power.”⁹³

Dilthey explains this upper level even further:

⁸⁹ Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, 326.

⁹⁰ Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, 137.

⁹¹ Naugle, *Worldview*, 87.

⁹² Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, 138.

⁹³ Naugle, *Worldview*, 87.

Even this highest level of world-view develops through different stages. From intention, striving[,] or a tendency[,] permanent purposes develop. They are directed towards the realization of an idea, the relationship of ends and means, the choice between ends, the selection of means and, finally, the combination of purposes into the highest order of our practical conduct—an embracing plan of life, a highest good, supreme norms of action, an ideal to shape personal life and society.⁹⁴

This structural schema of worldview sets Dilthey's theorization of worldview apart from previous discussions by articulating how worldviews actually work and come into being, bringing a new level of specificity and clarity to this subject.

Dilthey continues to illuminate the subject of worldviews by organizing different approaches to the enigma of life into a "Typology of Worldviews." He identifies three basic types. The naturalistic view of life forms the first of these. In this view, "the process of nature is the sole and entire reality; there is nothing else; mental life is only formally distinguished from physical nature by the characteristics of consciousness which, having no content of its own, is causally determined by physical reality."⁹⁵ Dilthey calls the second type of worldview "The Idealism of Freedom," which posits "the mind's sovereign independence from all given facts; the mind knows itself to be differentiated from all physical causality."⁹⁶ In addition to free will, the Idealism of Freedom includes the metaphysical view that "[t]he Divinity is separate from the physical, causal order and conceived of as governing in opposition to it—a projection of purposive reason independent of the given facts."⁹⁷ Historically, this worldview appears in many forms, from Plato and Aristotle, to certain forms of Christianity, to some transcendental German

⁹⁴ Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, 139.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

philosophers, but it retains common features that merit the common designation.⁹⁸ Finally, Dilthey calls the third type of worldview in the typology “Objective Idealism”:

In this contemplative attitude our emotional life, in which abundance of life, value and the happiness of existence are experienced personally, expands into a kind of universal sympathy. Through this expansion of ourselves in universal sympathy we fill and animate the whole of reality with the values which we feel, the activities in which we express ourselves and with the highest ideas of beauty, goodness and truth. We rediscover in reality the moods in which it evokes in us. As we expand our sense of life into sympathy with the whole world and experience our kinship with all the phenomena of reality, our joy in life and consciousness of our own power increases. This is the frame of mind in which the individual feels himself one with divine reality and kin to every part of it.⁹⁹

This view emphasizes the relatedness of all things, the part-whole relationship in which all individual phenomena participate within a greater totality.¹⁰⁰ A number of significant thinkers, including some that appeared in discussions of Mahler’s worldview, held this view: “[i]t can be observed in Heraclitus as well as the Stoa, in Giordano Bruno and Spinoza and in Shaftsbury, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Schleiermacher, for it is based on their attitude to life.”¹⁰¹ According to Dilthey, “[n]o one has expressed this frame of mind more beautifully than Goethe.”¹⁰²

One should note that Dilthey does not consider this to be an exhaustive typology of worldview categories. Rather, they serve as useful ways of understanding similarities between certain modes of thought. Further, he posits an “inner-dialectic” with respect to worldview formation. Ermarth explains, “[t]he world-view is coherent and stabilizing but not self-enclosed and static, for it is attended by an ‘inner-dialectic’ which compels the revision of premises.”¹⁰³ Thus, worldview formation is always a process and never entirely stable. Similarly to Nietzsche,

⁹⁸ Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, 150.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 151-52.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 152.

¹⁰³ Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, 329.

this may suggest a relativistic perspective on Dilthey's part, but Ermarth refutes this argument, stating, "[t]o say that the truth is given to us in broken rays is not to say that there is not truth, but rather to remain vigilant against dogmatic foreclosures, partiality, and complacency."¹⁰⁴

Additionally, he observes, "[i]t seems almost too obvious to stress that a world-view cannot be viewed *as* a world-view unless it is taken as a particular and partial formulation within a more comprehensive perspective, even if this latter cannot be fully articulated in one system."¹⁰⁵ In summary, Dilthey articulates a theory of worldview as a semi-unconscious force, arising from experience and attitudes toward life, bringing unity and coherence to the problems of existence, falling into basic types that evolve over time, and providing the foundations for more thoroughly worked-out metaphysical systems of philosophy and religion. Therefore, Dilthey's thought on worldview represents the most significant work on the subject thus far, which proved influential for later thinkers.

In this history of *Weltanschauung*, one may observe that by the beginning of the twentieth century a growing crisis had emerged in philosophy. While none of the thinkers mentioned above proposed an explicitly relativist ideology, this notion nonetheless posed a threat to the prestigious discipline. If one can reduce all viewpoints (philosophical, religious, moral, etc.) to purely subjective constructions, the task of philosophy, as a truth-seeking enterprise through the rigorous application of logic, becomes inconsequential. Taking into account the rise of historicism—which heaped criticism upon past metaphysical systems—the concept of worldview posed a serious threat to the credibility of philosophy. Thus, beginning with Edmund Husserl, the school of phenomenology attempted to clearly differentiate between philosophy and

¹⁰⁴ Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, 337.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 335.

worldview. Husserl offers a critique of Dilthey, whom he knew personally, and establishes his own work as a course-correction for the philosophical discipline. Naugle explains this, saying, “[a]ccording to Husserl, philosophy since its beginning has claimed to be a rigorous and exact endeavor, though history clearly reveals that it has not been successful in fulfilling its own alleged scientific criteria. To remedy this deficiency, he presents the phenomenological method as the solution to philosophy’s ultimate vocation.”¹⁰⁶

Husserl saw worldviews primarily as a search for wisdom, and while this search for wisdom draws from an individual’s experiences in life, “*Weltanschauung*, he asserts, is not the achievement of a single, isolated person” but manifests itself as a product of its time.¹⁰⁷ These inherited cultural worldviews, subjected to scrutiny and refined from their initial presentation, may become what he termed “*Weltanschauung* philosophy.”¹⁰⁸ Naugle explains, “*Weltanschauung* philosophy surpasses mere *Weltanschauung* as a mature adult surpasses the immature child. Not only this, but worldview philosophy aims at an admirable goal, namely, the formation of an ideal human being characterized by ability and wisdom.”¹⁰⁹ The history of philosophy, then, consists of various “worldview philosophies,” which, while more rigorous than basic worldviews, still lack credibility. He contrasts this, however, with what he terms “scientific philosophy,” representing a more rigorous approach by taking inspiration from the rigors of the scientific method within a philosophical context. Thus, with the techniques of phenomenology, “Husserl claims that his particular research program is a presuppositionless endeavor. By means

¹⁰⁶ Naugle, *Worldview*, 109-10.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

of the phenomenological reduction known as ‘bracketing’ or the ‘*epoche*,’ all metaphysical and scientific assumptions are set aside.”¹¹⁰

As noted above, Heidegger, who followed Husserl in the phenomenological school, concerned himself with the meaning of worldview. In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger extends Husserl’s distinction between “worldview philosophy” and “scientific philosophy,” stating, “[w]e speak of ‘scientific philosophy’ principally because conceptions of philosophy prevail which not only imperil but even negate its character as science pure and simple.”¹¹¹ As for worldview, he claims, “what is meant by this term is not only a conception of the contexture of natural things but at the same time an interpretation of the sense and purpose of the human *Dasein* and hence of history. A world-view always includes a view of life.”¹¹² *Dasein*, a term used by Heidegger regarding his principal interest in the subject of Being, literally translates as “being there,” and Heidegger explains that *Dasein* refers to an entity that “each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of Being,” that is, an entity which “understands itself in terms of its existence.”¹¹³ Each *Dasein* finds itself in a state of “thrownness” (*Geworfenheit*)—the “there” in which the being in question finds itself.¹¹⁴ Because of the thrownness of the *Dasein*, it begins to interpret the world in terms of moods and states-of-mind. As Heidegger suggests, “we thus obtain as the *first* essential characteristic of states-of-mind that *they disclose Dasein in its thrownness*.”¹¹⁵ Therefore, *Dasein*, as a being aware of its

¹¹⁰ Naugle, *Worldview*, 116.

¹¹¹ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 4.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 27, 33.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 175.

own existence, creates a worldview as a response to being-in-the-world, which it does naturally in its thrownness.

Clarifying further, Heidegger states, “[a] world-view grows out of an all-inclusive reflection on the world and the human Dasein, and this again happens in different ways, explicitly and consciously in individuals or by appropriating an already prevalent world-view.”¹¹⁶ Invoking the historical-contextual view of Hegel and the typological view of Dilthey, he continues, “[o]ur world-view is determined by environment—people, race, class, developmental stage of culture. Every world-view thus individually formed arises out of a natural world-view, out of a range of conceptions of the world and determinations of the human Dasein which are at any particular time given more or less explicitly with each such Dasein.”¹¹⁷ Heidegger also sees worldview as governing behavior. Returning to the questions of “worldview philosophy” versus “scientific philosophy,” Heidegger postulates several ways of understanding the relationship of these terms. His conclusion remains the same as that of Husserl by critiquing philosophical endeavors of the past as an inappropriate blending of worldview and philosophy and distinguishing the phenomenological method as a rigorous and scientific approach.¹¹⁸ Unlike Husserl, however, Heidegger stresses the central importance of worldviews as a practical interpretation of the world, useful and necessary for everyday experience:

For the purpose of distinguishing between philosophy as world-view and scientific philosophy, it is above all important to see that the world-view, in its meaning, always arises out of the particular factual existence of the human being in accordance with his factual possibilities of thoughtful reflection and attitude-formation, and it arises thus *for* this factual Dasein.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 5.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹⁸ Naugle, *Worldview*, 135.

¹¹⁹ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 6.

Therefore, in response to the crisis of worldview arising out of its increasing popularity and intellectual capital around the turn of the twentieth century, the phenomenological school sought to restore the prestigious position of philosophy by making a hard distinction from worldview. While much more could be said about the development of worldview, I will formulate a working definition for use in this project that takes elements from this historical survey and reconciles, as far as possible, the various ideas surrounding this concept.

Worldview Defined

Given the intricacies of the multiple definitions of worldview, a one-sentence summary would be inadequate. Therefore, the following consolidates the previous thinkers' contributions to this topic into a cohesive, useful understanding of worldview. Fundamentally, worldviews, despite the initial use of the term to signify perception, refer to products of an individual consciousness, which arise as a practical means to answer the questions and enigmas of life. They exist, to some degree, both consciously and unconsciously, depending upon the individual. A person with a highly-developed worldview, bordering on a fully-fledged philosophical outlook, will perhaps possess a mostly conscious understanding of their worldview; while, on the other end of the spectrum, someone who rarely, if ever, reflects on their worldview might possess it primarily on the unconscious level. It seems that any individual worldview will exist, to some degree, in both categories. Worldviews form a fundamental part of a person's identity, which manifests itself on multiple strata: the individual, social, ethnic, national, religious, and historical. The creation of a worldview entails an act of hermeneutic synthesis.¹²⁰ The individual

¹²⁰ By the term "hermeneutic synthesis," I mean to unite two concepts—hermeneutics as an interpretive framework and synthesis as distillation of complexity—into a single mental operation that characterizes worldview formation.

synthesizes his or her experiences and knowledge of the world into a unified picture, reducing the overwhelming complexity of life into a graspable whole. This picture constitutes an interpretation of the world and of past, present, and future events in the life of the individual. In turn, this understanding affects the relationship of the individual to the world, providing a moral and behavioral framework. Thus, worldviews involve a three-step process: (1) perception of the world; (2) synthesis and interpretation of the world; and (3) values outwardly expressed as behavior in the world. Lastly, a worldview does not serve as a stable, immutable law but exists in an ongoing process of formation.

WORLDVIEW AND ART

Kant and Early Romantic Aesthetics

Along with the nineteenth century's gradual development of the concept of worldview came the related idea that, to some degree, worldview relates to artistic expression. Unsurprisingly, Kant laid the groundwork for this in *The Critique of Judgment*. Mark Evan Bonds argues that this work provided the philosophical ground for a Romantic aesthetic.¹²¹ Against the Enlightenment conception of beauty—the view that artistic beauty emerges from an imitation of the natural world—Kant, as Edward Lippman points out, discussed beauty in its relationship to consciousness, emerging from internal rather than external sources.¹²² Bonds summarizes this shift, stating: “Kant emphasized the creativity of perception and the capacity of

¹²¹ Mark Evan Bonds, *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 9-10.

¹²² Edward Lippman, *A History of Western Musical Aesthetics* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 126.

the imagination to mediate between reason and the senses. It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that after Kant, beauty would be defined no longer as a quality within a given object, but rather as a function of subjective, aesthetic perception.”¹²³ While Kant did not go so far as to discuss the relationship between worldview and art, the aesthetic shift toward subjectivity paved the way for later thinkers and artists.

Romantics seized upon this fundamental change, emphasizing the power of art, specifically instrumental music, to express profound truths otherwise inaccessible. According to Bonds, “[f]or the early Romantics, then, epistemology and aesthetics merged into a single enterprise that could be served equally well by both philosophy and poetry. The act of aesthetic perception became a philosophical activity because it went to the heart of what they considered to be the central questions of epistemology.”¹²⁴ If artistic expressions could communicate transcendent philosophical truths to the informed observer or listener, then connecting art and worldview seems a natural extension of these ideas. On the other hand, early Romantic writers on aesthetics tended to emphasize the power of art to reveal the infinite, the Absolute, the noumenal world, not necessarily the individual worldview of the artist. Schelling, whose redefinition of worldview formed an integral part of its evolution, provides a helpful example:

Building on the tradition of Kant, Schelling viewed the process of artistic creation as one in which the unconscious manifests itself through the conscious, thereby synthesizing the two. He emphasized art’s unique capacity among human endeavors to unite necessity (nature) and freedom (genius). The human mind cannot see itself in its unconscious form, Schelling argued, for to perceive the unconscious would in itself be an act of consciousness.¹²⁵

¹²³ Bonds *Music as Thought*, 40.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

Art, however, provides the means through which that unconscious world can manifest itself.¹²⁶ Recalling Schelling's notion of worldview as a product of the unconscious mind, one can see how, despite the emphasis on the expression of the infinite, Romantic thinkers laid the groundwork for connecting worldview and art.

Hegel's Aesthetics and Cultural Worldviews in Art

Hegel takes the next logical leap. As expected, his aesthetic views emerge out of his larger philosophical system, and a full explanation would not only be arduous but also unnecessary for the purpose of this study. Therefore, a brief outline of Hegel's thought on this subject will serve to indicate the intermingling of worldview and art after Kant and the early Idealists. For Hegel, the arts represent a stage in the dialectical journey of the Absolute Spirit towards complete knowledge of itself.¹²⁷ While Hegel maintains that this process begins with art, moves toward religion, and, ultimately, ends with philosophy, Copleston notes that "[Hegel] looked on art, religion, and philosophy as permanent activities of the human spirit."¹²⁸ Thus, while art forms the first stage of the dialectical process of the Absolute Spirit, it does not cease upon entering the next stage of development. Art's lower status stems from the fact that while "the content of art is the Idea"—that is to say the "self-thinking Thought," which "alone is *being*, *eternal life*, *self-knowing truth*, and it is *all truth*"—it must manifest itself in a particular form that cannot capture its entirety.¹²⁹ Artistic content must find concrete expression "because the purely abstract universal has not in itself the determinate character of advancing to

¹²⁶ Bonds, *Music as Thought*, 41.

¹²⁷ Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, 228-29.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹²⁹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 70; Copleston, *The History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, 195.

particularization and phenomenal manifestation.”¹³⁰ Thus, Hegel explains, “[n]ow art has to harmonize these two sides [content and form] and bring them into a free reconciled totality.”¹³¹

The means by which art manifests throughout time depends upon the prevalent worldview in which it emerges. Hegel viewed each culture and historical era as possessing its own worldview, and here he makes the explicit link between those worldviews and the artistic expressions resulting from them: “precisely on account of its form, art is limited to a specific content. Only one sphere and stage of truth is capable of being represented in the element of art.”¹³² Art itself must develop dialectically through a series of stages in order to arrive at the next phase of the Absolute Spirit. Hegel states this explicitly when he declares, “this development [of art] is itself a spiritual and universal one, since the sequence of definite conceptions of the world, as the definite but comprehensive consciousness of nature, man, and God, gives itself artistic shape.”¹³³ In a footnote to this statement, he expresses this even more clearly, noting, “the art expressive of one worldview differs from that which expresses another: Greek art as a whole differs from Christian art as a whole. The sequence of different religions gives rise to a sequence of different art-forms.”¹³⁴ Therefore, after the early Idealist philosophers seized upon Kant’s views of art and beauty as subjective aspects of consciousness, Hegel links this subjectivity to the shifting worldviews of differing cultures and eras, which produce varied approaches to art in terms of content (in the ways certain aspects of the Idea find expression) and form (the physical manifestation of said content).

¹³⁰ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 71.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 7.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

Dilthey and Artistic Expressions of Individual Worldviews

Although Hegel directly links different worldviews to varied forms of artistic expression, the connection remains tied to his philosophy of history and the dialectical process of large-scale cultural shifts. In the philosophy of Dilthey, however, one finds more direct relationship between worldview and art at the level of the individual artist. In his writing on art, Dilthey draws a distinction between his views and those of Kant. Instead of Kant's "beautiful appearance" (*schöner Schein*), art manifests truth. Ermarth explains, "[a]rt is not a fanciful world of pure images or forms but in continuity with life itself; it is a re-presentation of life which occasions a deeper consciousness of it, a consciousness to which no concept is entirely adequate."¹³⁵ Specifically, Dilthey emphasizes the relationship between artistic expression and what he called "lived experience," which he defines as "a distinctive and characteristic mode in which reality is there-for-me."¹³⁶ This involves the individual's temporal experience and interaction with other persons.¹³⁷ Impressions created by these interactions and experiences gradually give rise to a nexus of associated meanings, and this resource provides the basis for artistic expression.¹³⁸ Like worldviews themselves, artworks synthesize reality into cohesive products. Ermarth explains this, stating, "[b]y virtue of its concreteness and capacity for synthetic 'seeing,' art has a power of disclosure which scientific cognition cannot match."¹³⁹ Additionally, art "is intrinsically integrative and *shows* (rather than propounds) that we experience reality as a synthetic coherence rather than isolated elements or percepts."¹⁴⁰ Thus, art and worldview stem from similar sources

¹³⁵ Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, 133.

¹³⁶ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Selected Works*, vol. 5, *Poetry and Experience*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 223.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 225.

¹³⁹ Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, 133.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 134.

(impressions and experiences of life) and fulfill similar purposes (organizing experiences into a unified whole).

This emerges most clearly in an important section of Dilthey's biography of Schleiermacher, titled "The Development of a New World-View in German Literature." Here, he investigates the emergence of a system of thought reflected in the works of important German literary figures. In the editorial introduction to the English translation, H. P. Rickman summarizes its main themes:

[Dilthey] argues that, as a result of particular historical development, the literature of Schleiermacher's time provided not only entertainment and aesthetic pleasure but also a philosophy of life which shaped the outlook and thinking of educated Germans. He also shows that this is related to the fact that the outstanding poets were also serious thinkers and scholars who felt that their poetry and their scholarship were equally important and interdependent.¹⁴¹

This particular worldview, emergent in German literature of this period, corresponds to Dilthey's description of "Objective Idealism" from his typology of worldviews. The poet, according to Dilthey, develops an "ideal of life." He continues, "[t]his ideal of life achieves its most intensive power in the poet's intuition: but he only gains clear insight into himself through moral reflection, through the development of a world view and insight into its presuppositions and implications."¹⁴² Thus, the ideal of life, reflected in the poetic work, stems from the poet's worldview itself, and the degree to which the poet develops that worldview will determine the power of the expression. Dilthey, similarly to Hegel, discusses this reflection of worldview in art as emergent from a specific historical context:

Poetry, like science, expresses the universal, though not in an abstraction from many cases, but in the representation of one. In it man can express vividly and, therefore, with great emotional power his insight into his nature, destiny and highest moral ideals. What is thus expressed is the ideal of life of an epoch. Poetry's moral greatness depends on the

¹⁴¹ Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, 36.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 49.

truthfulness, as well as on the reconciling and purifying energy, with which it accomplishes this, its highest task. This aspect of poetry never appeared greater than when we had to shape an ideal of life using a creative moral spirit and not just distil it from an existing reality.¹⁴³

While the majority of this chapter investigates the particular features of Objective Idealism, these comments testify to Dilthey's belief that art can express worldview on both the collective and individual level.

Dilthey cautions, however, against attributing a direct relationship between the artwork and the worldview of the artist behind it. Ermarth explains, "Dilthey maintained that art says something about life in general, not simply the creator's particular experience."¹⁴⁴ In his essay, "Goethe and the Poetic Imagination," Dilthey plainly states, "[t]he work does not aim at being an expression or representation of our actual life. It isolates its object from the actual context of life and treats it as a totality in itself."¹⁴⁵ He warns, "I consider highly questionable the attempt to abstract general truths from poetry or even their quintessence as the world view of the poet."¹⁴⁶ And yet, Dilthey does believe the critic can move past this problem if the authors themselves provide interpretations, insights, or through critical interpretations drawn from credible sources: "the conceptual interpretation of a poetic work can only be accepted as strictly true in so far as the poet has become his own interpreter, either through rational expositions in his works or through scholarly investigations."¹⁴⁷ With Dilthey, therefore, one finds an explicit link between an artist's worldview and art, which comes with a warning against over-simplistic explanations of this connection without proper evidence. Now, in order to tie together the threads of this

¹⁴³ Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, 48.

¹⁴⁴ Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey*, 135.

¹⁴⁵ Dilthey, *Selected Works*, vol. 5, 250.

¹⁴⁶ Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, 55.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

discussion, there remains one final philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, whose work will bridge the gap between these ideas.

PAUL RICOEUR'S *TIME AND NARRATIVE*

Summary of the Basic Argument

Ricoeur's thought arises out of the phenomenological tradition, influenced by thinkers such as Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer.¹⁴⁸ Ricoeur considered his work, however, as an alternative to the two main streams of phenomenology—represented in the works of Husserl, on the one hand, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty on the other—by introducing a third stream known as “hermeneutic phenomenology.”¹⁴⁹ This approach rests on the thesis that “existence is itself a mode of interpretation (*hermeneia*), or, as the hermeneutic maxim goes: *Life interprets itself*.”¹⁵⁰ By this, as Richard Kearney explains, Ricoeur means that “human existence only becomes a self by retrieving meanings which first reside ‘outside’ of itself in the social institutions and cultural monuments in which the life of the spirit is objectified.”¹⁵¹ Ricoeur developed his ideas over a series of philosophical works, but his three-volume opus, *Time and Narrative*, delivers the most elaborate articulation of his hermeneutic phenomenology. In this work, Ricoeur completes the connection between worldview and artistic expression, although worldview does not constitute an explicit aspect of Ricoeur's philosophical agenda. He begins with the basic assertion that

¹⁴⁸ Richard Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur: The Owl of Minerva* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 1.

¹⁴⁹ Don Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1971), 4.

¹⁵⁰ Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur*, 1.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

human experience is fundamentally and inescapably temporal.¹⁵² Of course, this also applies to narrative. Ricoeur explains: “[t]he world unfolded by every narrative work is always a temporal world. Or, as will often be repeated in the course of this study: time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience.”¹⁵³ The relationship between existence and narrative, Ricoeur argues, reveals a profound connection through their mutually temporal character. And yet the human experience of time consistently creates difficulties when subjected to philosophical reflection.

In order to interrogate what he calls the “Aporias of Time,” Ricoeur draws from two philosophical sources: Augustine’s *Confessions* and Aristotle’s *Poetics*.¹⁵⁴ From Augustine, Ricoeur borrows the notion that the subjective experience of time exists as a “three-fold present,” meaning, “by entrusting to memory the fate of things past, and to expectation that of things to come, we can include memory and expectation in an extended and dialectical present.”¹⁵⁵ By extending the notion of the present, Augustine’s three-fold concept provides an excellent explanation of the human experience of time, and yet, “[t]he solution of the aporia of the being and nonbeing of time through the notion of the three-fold present continues to be fragile so long as the enigma of the measurement of time has not been resolved.”¹⁵⁶ Ricoeur contrasts this with the view put forth by Aristotle, emphasizing the objective measurement of time based on the

¹⁵² Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 3.

¹⁵³ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 3.

¹⁵⁴ The term “aporia” refers to a philosophical “puzzle,” “question for discussion,” or “state of perplexity.” Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 34.

¹⁵⁵ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 11.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

movement of the heavenly bodies.¹⁵⁷ In the third volume of *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur pushes this dichotomy even further by examining philosophical investigations of time from Husserl (in Augustine's camp) and Kant (in Aristotle's camp), neither of which adequately account for the tension between subjective and objective time. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger acknowledges and attempts to resolve this tension, but according to Ricoeur, he only deepens the aporia: "[t]his 'failure,' in my opinion, is what brings the aporetic character of temporality to its peak. It sums up the failure of all our thinking about time, and first and foremost that of phenomenology [the subjective view] and of science [the objective view]."¹⁵⁸

For Ricoeur, the exploration of this tension falls to narrative: "between the activity of narrating a story and the temporal character of human experience there exists a correlation that is not merely accidental but that presents a transcultural form of necessity."¹⁵⁹ More specifically, he argues, "I see in the plots we invent the privileged means by which we re-configure our confused, unformed, and at the limit mute temporal experience."¹⁶⁰ Ricoeur consistently maintains that narratives and their plots do not solve the riddle of time, but he also emphasizes the unique ability of fictional narratives to mediate between the subjective and objective experiences of time in new and interesting ways.¹⁶¹ Therefore, narrative plays a foundational role in an individual's understanding of the world, including the self.

Ricoeur builds on this thesis by drawing from Aristotle's *Poetics*, specifically his concept of *muthos*, which he translates into the concept of "emplotment"—the assembly of disparate

¹⁵⁷ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 14.

¹⁵⁸ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 57.

¹⁵⁹ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 52.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, xi.

¹⁶¹ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, 140.

events into a unified whole: “Augustine groaned under the existential burden of discordance. Aristotle discerns in the poetic act par excellence—the composing of the tragic poem—the triumph of concordance over discordance.”¹⁶² *Muthos* constitutes the act of composing a narrative work, accomplished through *mimēsis*. Ricoeur defines *mimēsis* as “‘imitation’ or ‘representation’ . . . what has to be understood is the mimetic activity, the active process of imitating or representing something”; the “something” represented by *muthos* is action itself, and the imitated action (*mimēsis*) provides the material for emplotment (*muthos*).¹⁶³ Plots do not merely present imitated actions. They organize those events into something meaningful, hence Ricoeur’s notion of emplotment as the “triumph of concordance over discordance.” He explains this further, stating, “[a] story . . . must be more than just an enumeration of events in serial order; it must organize them into an intelligible whole, of a sort such that we can always ask what is the ‘through’ of this story. In short, emplotment is the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession.”¹⁶⁴ Therefore, narratives fulfill an important function by answering the discordant aspects of human temporality through a coherent ordering of imitated actions. Not only do narrative works represent reality, artists “invent the as-if.”¹⁶⁵ They present a vision of human experience through the synthetic operation of emplotment.

Three-Fold Mimesis

Ricoeur combines Augustine’s notion of the three-fold present with Aristotle’s *mimēsis* and *muthos* into the concept of “three-fold mimesis” and outlines its purpose, stating:

¹⁶² Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 31.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 33.

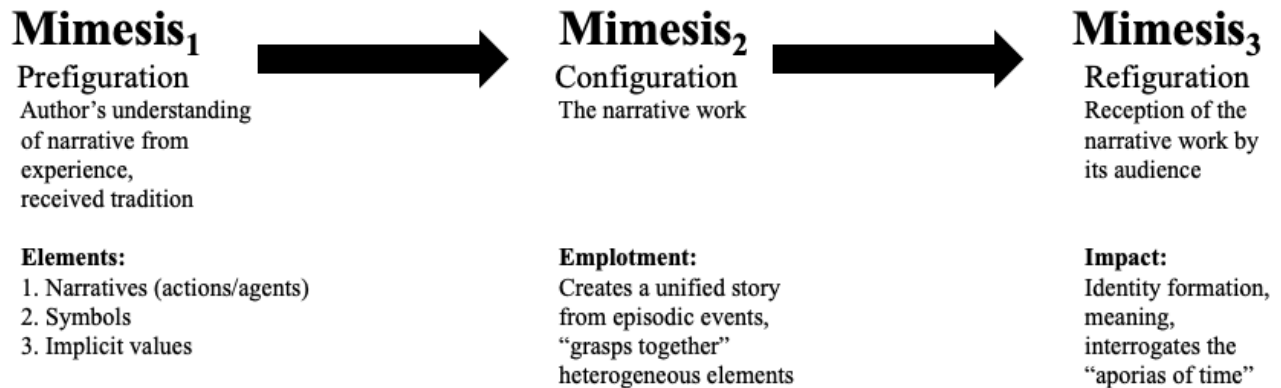
¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

By moving from the initial question of the *mediation* between time and narrative to the new question of connecting the three stages of mimesis, I am basing the whole strategy of my work on the subordination of the second problem to the first one. . . . I must establish the mediating role of emplotment between a stage of practical experience that precedes it and a stage that succeeds it. In this sense my argument in the book consists of constructing the mediation between time and narrative by demonstrating emplotment’s mediating role in the mimetic process. . . . *We are following therefore the destiny of a prefigured time that becomes a refigured time through the mediation of a configured time.*¹⁶⁶

Three-fold mimesis, then, involves the movement between what Ricoeur calls the three “mimetic modes”: mimesis₁ (“prefigured time”), mimesis₂ (“configured time”), and mimesis₃ (“refigured time”). The act described in moving from the first to the third mode involves the creation and reception of the narrative work of art. In other words, Ricoeur’s schema lays out the process by which an author’s understanding of the world moves toward the creation of a work and, ultimately, encounters the perspective of the audience that receives it.

Figure 1.1: Ricoeur’s Three-Fold Mimesis



¹⁶⁶ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 53-54.

*Mimesis*₁

This first stage represents an author's "pre-understanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources, and its temporal character."¹⁶⁷ To create a narrative work, the author must possess some degree of narrative competence. Thus, the first mimetic mode stands for the artist's understanding of the world of action, based upon life experience and the influence of other received narratives. This involves a conceptual network pertaining to actions within a narrative:

Actions imply goals, the anticipation of which is not confused with some foreseen or predicted result, but which commit the one on whom the action depends. Actions, moreover, refer to motives, which explain why someone does or did something, in a way that we clearly distinguish from the way one physical event leads to another. Actions also have agents, who do and can do things which are taken as *their* work, or *their* deed. As a result, these agents can be held responsible for certain consequences of their actions.¹⁶⁸

This "practical understanding," as Ricoeur calls it, relates to narrative understanding in two ways: presupposition and transformation.¹⁶⁹ Presupposition refers to the author's understanding of the above-mentioned nexus of action-related concepts, and transformation refers to the use of these syntactic features in relationship with a pre-established narrative tradition.¹⁷⁰ Ricoeur explains, "[t]o understand a story is to understand both the language of 'doing something' and the cultural tradition from which proceeds the typology of plots."¹⁷¹

Two related concepts that spring from an author's practical understanding will form significant aspects of this project. The first of these, "the symbolic resources of the practical field," Ricoeur defines as "cultural processes that articulate experience," and clarifying this

¹⁶⁷ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 54.

¹⁶⁸ Ric, 55.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 56.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 57.

further, he states, “[i]f, in fact, human action can be narrated, it is because it is always already articulated by signs, rules, and norms. It is always already symbolically mediated.”¹⁷² In other words, the symbols of narrative do not arise in a vacuum. Rather, they emerge out of a particular context. And because these symbols stem from cultural practices, this leads to a second related concept: “actions can be estimated or evaluated, that is, judged according to a scale of moral preferences. . . . These degrees of value, first attributed to actions, can be extended to the agents themselves, who are held to be good or bad, better or worse.”¹⁷³ Because of this, one may link narratives directly to ethical concerns. Thus, the three aspects of *mimesis*₁ involve the author’s practical understanding of narrative action, symbols, and the ethical implications that result, which constitute all the necessary elements for the creation of a narrative work. Therefore, “[u]pon this preunderstanding, common to both poets and their readers, emplotment is constructed, and, with it, textual and literary mimetics.”¹⁷⁴

***Mimesis*₂**

*Mimesis*₂ applies this preunderstanding to the creation of narrative as “configured time,” which remained only “prefigured” in *mimesis*₁. Through the act of emplotment, Ricoeur explains, “*mimesis*₂ opens the kingdom of the *as if*.”¹⁷⁵ While the notion of the “as if” suggests fiction, Ricoeur spends much of *Time and Narrative* examining and defending the notion that this process equally applies to forms of historical narrative. In either case, emplotment mediates in three ways: “[f]irst, it is a mediation between the individual events or incidents and a story

¹⁷² Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 57.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

taken as a whole. In this respect, we may say equivalently that it draws a meaningful story from a diversity of events or incidents (Aristotle's *pragmata*) or that it transforms the events or incidents into a story."¹⁷⁶ Second, "emplotment brings together factors as heterogeneous as agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, unexpected results."¹⁷⁷ By including among these heterogeneous factors discordant elements such as "pitiable and fearful incidents, sudden reversals, recognitions, and violent effects," the configuring operation provides a model of concordant discordance.¹⁷⁸ Third, emplotment mediates through its approach to the temporal:

[A plot] reflects the paradox [of time] inasmuch as the act of emplotment combines in variable proportions two temporal dimensions, one chronological and the other not. The former constitutes the episodic dimension of narrative. It characterizes the story insofar as it is made up of events. The second is the configurational dimension properly speaking, thanks to which the plot transforms the events into a story. This configuration act consists of "grasping together" the detailed actions or what I have called the story's incidents. It draws from this manifold of events the unity of one temporal whole.¹⁷⁹

Ricoeur does not shy away from declaring the significance of this configuring act: "[b]y mediating between the two poles of event and story, emplotment brings to the paradox [of time] a solution that is the poetic act itself."¹⁸⁰ Related to configuration, Ricoeur discusses the importance of the "followability" of a story. The events and actions of a narrative cannot simply form an episodic chain. Rather, they must directly point toward the story's conclusion: "[t]o understand the story is to understand how and why the successive episodes led to this conclusion, which, far from being foreseeable, must finally be acceptable, as congruent with the episodes brought together by the story."¹⁸¹ The necessity for causality between events confers significance

¹⁷⁶ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 64.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 65-66.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 66.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 67.

to all the elements found within the narrative as part of the movement toward its conclusion. It is, then, the reception of these configured works that brings us to the final phase of Ricoeur's three-fold mimesis.

Mimesis₃

The last of the three modes, which Ricoeur terms "refigured time," "marks the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader; the intersection, therefore, of the world configured by the poem and the world wherein real action occurs and unfolds its specific temporality."¹⁸² Mimesis₃ accounts for the impact of narrative on a person's identity. Narratives posit solutions to the difficulties of temporal experience by reconciling disparate elements into a unified whole, turning isolated incidents into causal and meaningful sequences of actions. But the mimetic process can only reach its completion in the reception of the work. Ricoeur argues, "[t]he act of reading is thus the operator that joins mimesis₃ to mimesis₂. It is the final indicator of the refiguring of the world of action under the sign of the plot."¹⁸³ One may easily apply "reading" to the reception of other forms of artistic expression, so "listening" in the case of a musical performance could also exemplify mimesis₃.

The refiguration of time by narrative occurs because "[w]hat is communicated, in the final analysis, is, beyond the sense of a work, the world it projects and that constitutes its horizon. In this sense, the listeners or readers receive it according to their own receptive capacity, which itself is defined by a situation that is both limited and open to the world's horizon."¹⁸⁴

Ricoeur clarifies that the notion of "horizon," a term borrowed from Hans-Georg Gadamer, rests

¹⁸² Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 71.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

on three presuppositions. First, in the specific case of works involving the use of language, the work “says something *about* something.”¹⁸⁵ He explains further, “[w]hat a reader receives is not just the sense of the work, but, through its sense, its reference, that is, the experience it brings to language and, in the last analysis, the world and the temporality it unfolds in the face of this experience.”¹⁸⁶ Second, Ricoeur argues that, despite the fact that “referential illusions” make up the content of fictional works, narratives retain the ability to interact with and even impact the world of the reader.¹⁸⁷ He confesses:

I will say that, for me, the world is the whole set of references opened by every sort of descriptive or poetic text I have read, interpreted, and loved. To understand these texts is to interpolate among the predicates of our situation all those meanings that, from a simple environment (*Umwelt*), make a world (*Welt*). Indeed we owe a large part of the enlarging of our horizon of existence to poetic works. Far from producing only weakened images of reality—shadows, as in the Platonic treatment of the *eikōn* in painting or writing (*Phaedrus* 274e-77e)—literary works depict reality by *augmenting* it with meanings that themselves depend upon the virtues of abbreviation, saturation, and culmination, so strikingly illustrated by emplotment.¹⁸⁸

Third, Ricoeur posits that “[w]hat is resignified by narrative is what was already presignified at the level of human acting.”¹⁸⁹ Thus, mimesis₂ (the work) provides the mediation between mimesis₁ (an understanding of action and received narrative tradition) and mimesis₃ (the impact of those symbolic resources found in the work on the horizon of the reader). Therefore, via the process of three-fold mimesis, one can begin to understand, with greater precision, how worldview relates to artistic expression.

¹⁸⁵ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 78.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

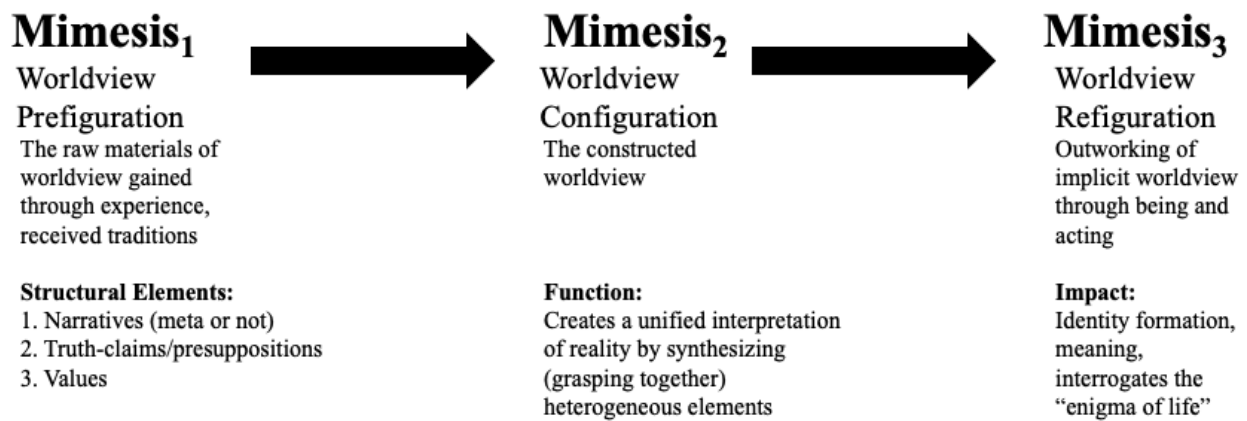
¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

Worldview and Three-Fold Mimesis

Mimesis₁: Worldview Prefiguration

Mapping Ricoeur's model onto our definition of worldview, produces a schema that highlights the process by which worldviews come into being.

Figure 1.2: A Three-Fold Model of Worldview Formation



When Ricoeur speaks of *mimesis₁*, one can reinterpret this as the worldview of the artist. While he constrains his language to refer mainly to the resources and competencies that allow for narrative configuration, Ricoeur clearly alludes to a larger concept when he refers to the "pre-understanding" necessary for the creation of a narrative work. What could this pre-understanding stem from other than the kind of "lived experience" discussed by Dilthey? The artist's experiences inform his or her understanding of action, the available symbolic resources, and the received narrative traditions that come to bear on the creation of a work. These elements emerge not only from the individual but from the broader cultural-historical context. Just as an

individual's worldview exists on multiple strata of identity, so do narrative resources correspond to those levels. Popular stories, significant cultural artifacts, religious symbols and narratives, political affiliations, narratives of national identity—all of these provide the basis for worldviews and narrative configurations. Both involve an interpretation of these varied elements through their synthesis into a cohesive, unified whole. By merging these heterogeneous elements together, the artist participates simultaneously in the formation of worldview and the necessary prefiguration for artistic expression.

Mimesis₂: Worldview Configuration

Here, one observes the configuration of worldview (*mimesis₁*) into a tangible artistic creation. Through the resources found in the preunderstanding of narrative, worldview becomes encoded into the work. Ricoeur certainly implies this when discussing how works project a “world” or a “horizon,” terminology that demonstrates the influence of Gadamer on his thought. Regarding Gadamer's use of these terms in *Truth and Method*, Naugle argues, “[f]rom the fact that a horizon constitutes a vantage point in which an interpreter is located, and insofar as this vantage point is defined by the interpreter's prejudices, it may be surmised that horizon, so understood, serves as a helpful metaphor for a structure similar to worldview. Interpretation, in other words, is guided by worldview-like prejudices and horizons.”¹⁹⁰ Ricoeur confirms this identification of *mimesis₂* with encoded worldview through his examination of three literary works in the second volume of *Time and Narrative*. Before beginning his analysis, Ricoeur

¹⁹⁰ Naugle, *Worldview*, 318.

states, “our interest lies in the worldview and the temporal experience that this configuration projects outside of itself.”¹⁹¹ Thus, what is projected by the work is, in fact, a worldview.

This raises an important question regarding the shift from mimesis₁ to mimesis₂. Does the worldview projected by the work directly reflect the worldview of its author? Ricoeur addresses this problem at length:

It is first of all on the plane of ideology, that is, of evaluation, that the notion of point of view takes shape, insofar as an ideology is the system that governs the conceptual vision of the world in all or part of a work. It may be the vision of the author or that of the characters. What is termed the “authorial point of view” is not the conception of the world of the real author but that which presides over the organization of the narrative of a particular work.¹⁹²

While the work does project a worldview, the worldview it projects may or may not represent that of the literal, historical author. Ricoeur maintains, “the only type of author whose authority is in question here is not the real author, the object of biography, but the implied author.”¹⁹³ The notion of an implied author remains necessary because, even with narratives that lack a distinct narrator’s voice, an implied narrator always exists behind the discourse, since, as he points out, “[t]he story is told by someone.”¹⁹⁴ Thus, the worldview(s) revealed in the work may not represent the exact views of its creator. To attempt such a connection, one would need to turn outside the analysis of the work itself. The movement from worldview at the level of mimesis₁ to that of mimesis₂ will reveal some degree of connection, not yet determined, between the artist’s fundamental belief structure and its configuration in the work.

¹⁹¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 101-2.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 93-94.

¹⁹³ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, 160.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 163.

Mimesis₃: Worldview Refiguration

Finally, in *mimesis₃*, the worldview projected by the work encounters those of its audience. Although this may produce some degree of conflict between differing perspectives, Ricoeur argues that this forms a necessary part of the mimetic process: “[i]t is only in reading that the dynamism of configuration completes its course. And it is beyond reading, in effective action, instructed by the works handed down, that the configuration of the text is transformed into refiguration.”¹⁹⁵ The power of narrative to affect behavior (the outward manifestation of worldview) depends on this meeting between text and audience. Part of this transformative power comes from the rhetorical strategies employed in the work. By invoking such rhetorical strategies, Ricoeur sidesteps the question of authorial intent by noting that these rhetorical techniques “can be discerned in the work itself.”¹⁹⁶ Thus, the worldview projected by the work reflects that of an “implied” or “virtual” author, revealed through rhetorical strategies discernible in the work itself. The text also requires a reader, without which “there is no configuring act at work in the text.”¹⁹⁷ Even further, “reading is no longer that which the text prescribes; it is that which brings the structure of the text to light through interpretation.”¹⁹⁸ Ricoeur calls for a theory of reading (applicable, as I argue, to other artistic forms of expression) that takes account of both its passive and active aspects—passive referring to the way in which one is subjected to a work’s rhetorical strategies and active referring to the reader’s role in the work’s realization.

¹⁹⁵ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, 159.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 164.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 165.

Worldview and Narrative Identity

Before leaving Ricoeur's philosophy, let us examine one more aspect of his thought, pertinent to the examination in the chapter that follows. Ricoeur frequently emphasizes the individual's need for narrative for the construction of identity. In his essay entitled "Narrative Identity," Ricoeur clarifies the ways in which both fictional and historical narratives supply the means through which a person comes to self-understanding:

[S]elf-knowledge is an interpretation; self interpretation, in its turn, finds a narrative, among other signs and symbols, a privileged mediation; this mediation draws on history as much as it does on fiction, turning the story of a life into a fictional story or a historical fiction, comparable to those biographies of great men in which history and fiction are intertwined.¹⁹⁹

In a narrative, a character's selfhood, ontologically speaking, becomes fixed to the actions taken by that character in the story. He explains, "narrative constructs the durable properties of a character, what one could call his narrative identity, by constructing the kind of dynamic identity found in the plot which creates the character's identity."²⁰⁰ Since narratives imitate action, questions of character identity ("the self" in ontological terms) become inextricably linked with actions in the plot and their moral implications ("the same"—the ascription of actions and moral status to the character).²⁰¹ Because of this, "[i]n the course of the application of literature to life, what we carry over and transpose into the exegesis of ourselves is this dialectic of the self and the same. There we can find the purgative virtue of the thought-experiments deployed by literature, not only at the level of theoretical reflection, but at that of existence."²⁰² In other words, self-interpretation ("the exegesis of ourselves" in Ricoeur's words) emerges out of an

¹⁹⁹ Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Identity," in *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. and trans. David Wood, 188-99 (London: Routledge, 1991), 188.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 195.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 197.

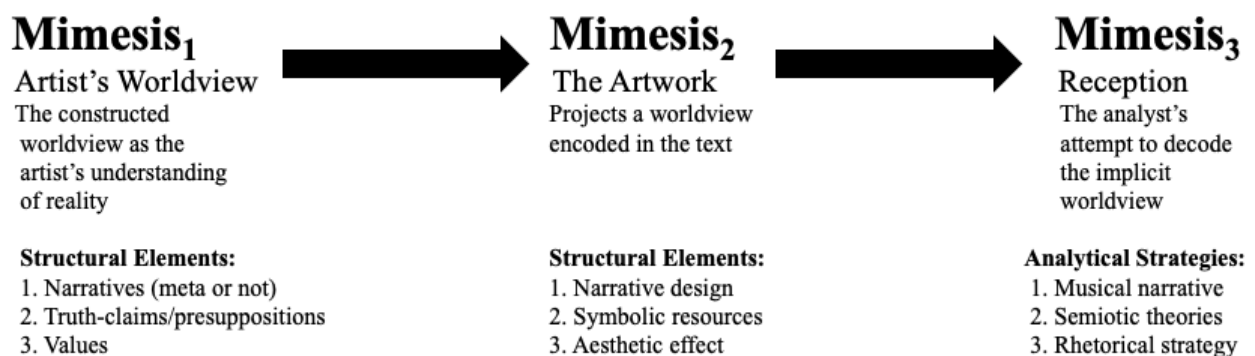
²⁰² *Ibid.*, 198.

understanding of the constructions of identity given to characters through narrative. Ricoeur explains further in another essay, “Life in Quest of Narrative,” “[i]f it is true that fiction is only completed in life and that life can be understood only through the stories that we tell about it, then an *examined* life, in the sense of the word as we have borrowed it from Socrates, is a life *recounted*.”²⁰³ Therefore, narrative works form an essential part of an individual’s worldview as the basis by which one can understand being and doing in the world, and it is through the process of three-fold mimesis that worldviews are formed, expressed, and reformed.

WORLDVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Following Dilthey, I put forward the notion that worldviews, while highly variable in content, remain consistent in structure. After considering the contributions of a number of thinkers on this topic, particularly Ricoeur, I will now put forward a structure of worldview and relate that structure to analytical strategies for the analysis of musical works.

Figure 1.3: A Three-Fold Model of Worldview Analysis



²⁰³ Paul Ricoeur, “Life in Quest of Narrative,” in *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed., David Wood, 20-33 (London: Routledge, 1991), 31.

Fundamentally, worldviews begin with narrative, which serves the purpose of “grasping together” varied experiences into a unified whole. These narratives imply certain presuppositions regarding the nature of reality in the form of truth-claims that one may abstract from the plot. In turn, these narratives and truth-claims inform an individual’s values and actions as the outward expression of an inner belief system. As for narrative artworks, one finds a strikingly homologous structure at work. These artistic products contain narratives that, through emplotment, perform a strikingly similar operation to that of worldview. Narratives also rely on symbolic resources, based in socio-cultural practices, that open outward into the realm of abstract truth-claims. In other words, narrative art encodes presuppositions about the world through symbolism. Finally, as Ricoeur discussed with his concept of narrative identity, these works suggest modes of being, implying values both aesthetic and ethical. Because of this homologous structural and functional relationship, I argue that such artworks exist, primarily, as worldview hypotheses.

Applying this theoretical foundation to musical analysis, the first case study examines Mahler’s Fifth Symphony through the lens of narrative. Recent developments in music theory on this subject allow for new and interesting analytical avenues of exploration. Specifically, Byron Almén’s *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, will provide a general foundation for narrative investigation. Additionally, Seth Monahan’s recent monograph, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, represents a significant step forward for a Mahler-specific approach to narrative. The analysis of the Fifth Symphony will draw from these and other theorists to interrogate its complex and unique narrative design. The second case study focuses on a single musical symbol that Mahler employs in his Sixth Symphony. The investigation of this short motivic idea relates to broader questions of meaning both philosophically and in relation to Mahler’s entire *oeuvre*. This

necessarily involves a discussion of symbolism in general and the use of musical codes, ciphers, and leitmotifs in nineteenth-century practice. As a symbol directly tied to significant aspects of Mahler's worldview and musical expression, I will attempt to elucidate its meaning. The final case study takes up Mahler's aesthetic values as external aspects of his inner life. By "external" I mean the real-world application of the internal mental processes and structures of worldview. As such, this chapter will explore Mahler's compositional process and attempt to articulate his aesthetic values. Due to the existence of more extensive sketch documentation, the Seventh Symphony will serve as the focus of this investigation. Drawing from the studies of James Zychowicz on Mahler's compositional process, this study will compare statements of Mahler regarding his artistic intentions to the actual documentary evidence of his practices. The conclusion of this project will draw the various threads of the case studies together for a comprehensive interpretation of Mahler's middle-period symphonies in light of these categories of worldview.

Two points of clarification need to be made before proceeding with the case studies. First, recalling Ricoeur's position on the "intentional fallacy," it would be wise to make a similar appeal here. Rather than claim that the worldview of the text directly reflects that of the author, each work instead reveals the encoded worldview, via rhetorical strategies, of the "implied author." Any attempt at decoding that worldview will, to some degree, reflect the worldview of the analyst. Far from a hopelessly relativistic hermeneutic, however, the shift away from the author (initially) and toward the rhetorical strategies themselves allows for a more objective approach to the text. Thus, the case studies will attempt to establish a purely textual interpretation of the encoded worldview first and foremost. Only afterward, by taking account of the known facts of Mahler's life and context, will I hypothesize the relationship between the

emergent worldview of the text and that of its author. Any conclusions in this regard will always remain tentative, but as I will argue in the following chapter, this should not prevent us from making the attempt.

Second, this chapter's sketch of the conceptual development of worldview does not constitute an exhaustive treatment on the subject. Such a task certainly lies beyond the scope of this study. The conclusions drawn from it—aimed toward a working definition of worldview, its relationship to artistic expression, and an application to musical analysis—cannot serve as the final word on this topic. As our discussion of worldview suggests, this only accounts for one perspective out of a multitude of possibilities. Its validity can only be assessed in relationship to its usefulness as a means of better understanding this enduring topic in Mahler studies. Therefore, the following case studies, taking up aspects of the relationship between worldview and art, will pursue this method as a legitimate and illuminating framework for analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

Triumph through Reconciliation: Mahler's Fifth Symphony and Narrative Identity

Over the course of the last century, as Mahler's symphonies emerged from relative obscurity and became part of the repertory and a fully-formed area of academic research, the debate surrounding the interpretation of his music as "programmatic" or "absolute" has remained a constant presence. Vera Micznik, addressing this aspect of Mahler research, states, "[s]ides taken within this dichotomy have varied throughout the generations, and continue to be negotiated even today."¹ Frequently, those on the side of programs champion autobiographical readings, despite prevailing notions in musicology—and the humanities in general—against author-centric interpretations. Floros, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, certainly falls into the programmatic camp. But far from an outdated or unpopular view, this presupposition on the part of Floros remains a common—though certainly not universal—feature of hermeneutic approaches to these symphonies. For example, Charles Youmans recently argued that Mahler "crouched behind nameless heroic protagonists who nonetheless voiced authorial confessions."² Perhaps more than any other composer, Mahler's music compels listeners to hear it as emanating directly from his life.

One may partially explain this tendency with the multitude of statements from Mahler that appear to legitimize an autobiographical interpretive approach. Concerning the First and

¹ Vera Micznik, "Music and aesthetics: the programmatic issue," in *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham, 35-48 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 38.

² Charles Youmans, *Mahler & Strauss in Dialogue* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2016), 107.

Second Symphonies, he once told his confidant Natalie Bauer-Lechner, “[m]y two symphonies contain the inner aspect of my whole life . . . To understand these works properly would be to see my life transparently revealed in them.”³ At other times, however, Mahler rebuked overly simplistic programmatic explanations of his music, as in this letter to Max Marschalk, stating, “[j]ust as I find it banal to compose programmatic music, I regard it as unsatisfactory and unfruitful to try to make program notes for a piece of music”; although this statement apparently vindicates proponents of absolute music, Mahler clarifies, “the *reason* why a composition comes into being at all is bound to be something the composer has experienced, something real, which might after all be considered sufficiently concrete to be expressed in words.”⁴ It seems, then, that Mahler’s ideal approach to his work falls somewhere between or, more precisely, goes deeper than a purely absolute or simplistically descriptive hermeneutic would allow. He articulates this in another letter to Marschalk concerning the Second, saying, “[i]n conceiving the work I was never concerned with detailed description of an *event*, but at most with that of a *feeling*. . . . The fact that in various individual passages I often retrospectively see a real event as it were taking its course dramatically before my eyes can easily be gathered from the nature of the music.”⁵ Thus, emotion guides the composition rather than a strict attempt at representation. And yet, this does not discount that one can discern an event-like logic in the progress of the music.

Mahler believed that from the musical enactment of those emotions emerged, unconsciously, an autobiographical narrative coherence, discernable only after the fact. A clear example of this comes from his account of the inspiration for the Second Symphony’s Finale:

³ Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, ed. Peter Franklin, trans. Dika Newman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 30.

⁴ Knud Martner, ed., *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, trans. Eithne Wilkins, Ernest Kaiser, and Bill Hopkins (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979), 179.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

I had long contemplated bringing in the choir in the last movement, and only the fear that it would be taken as a formal imitation of Beethoven made me hesitate again and again. Then [Hans von] Bülow died, and I went to the memorial service.—The mood in which I sat and pondered on the departed was utterly in the spirit of what I was working on at the time.—Then the choir, up in the organ-loft, intoned Klopstock’s *Resurrection* chorale.—It flashed on me like lightning, and everywhere became plain and clear in my mind! It was the flash that all creative artists wait for—“conceiving by the Holy Ghost!”

What I then *experienced* had now to be expressed in sound. And yet—if I had not already borne the work within me—how could I have had that experience? There were thousands of others sitting there in the church at the time!—It is always the same with me: *only when I experience something* do I compose, and only when composing do I experience!⁶

For Mahler, contra later notions of the supposed “Death of the Author,” one path to a work’s meaning, perhaps even the ideal one, can be found through the creative personality that brought it into being. In another letter, Mahler emphatically elevates the creator over the creation:

One can only know and appreciate a piece of music by making a *thorough* study of it, and the profounder the work, the harder this is and the longer it takes. . . . But how does he set about it if it is the *man* he seeks to know, who is, after all, profounder and even better than his work? Where are the program notes for that? What has to be done in that case too is to give plenty of time to him, attentively and lovingly endeavoring to understand his innermost being!⁷

The primary reason to privilege or at least entertain the notion of an autobiographical reading of Mahler’s music comes directly and unambiguously from Mahler himself. Even still, one should not make the mistake of attempting a simplistic programmatic explanation, though walking this line creates an interpretive challenge. Instead, one might opt for a quasi-autobiographical approach that takes insight from Mahler’s real-life experiences but does not attempt to map specific life events onto musical features too strictly.

Regarding the middle-period symphonies, another justification for a quasi-autobiographical reading comes from a comparison of their aesthetic quality, as a trilogy, to Mahler’s first four efforts in the genre. The programs and textual resources of the *Wunderhorn*

⁶ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 212.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 152.

Symphonies, along with the use of conventional symbols enabling what Byron Almén describes as “creative mythopoesis,” contribute to their distinct, aesthetic unity.⁸ The Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh all demonstrate a radical departure from this expressive world in several ways. Beyond the lack of written explanations employed in the formal concert setting, Mahler even refrained from referring to such “guideposts” in private conversation. The middle-period works do not include the vocal resources and poetry settings used in the Second through Fourth Symphonies. They also appear less overtly (though still implicitly) concerned with mythological, philosophical, or theological subjects. Instead, Mahler initiates a self-described “completely new style” with the Fifth, one that suggests, even for Mahler, a higher degree of subjectivity.⁹ Whereas the *Wunderhorn* tetralogy forms a complete cosmology—the heroic struggle of the First, the religious statement of the Second, the tiered arrangement of Nature in the Third, and the exploration of life after death in the Fourth—the middle-period works delve deeper into the realm of the psychological. As the following analysis will show, Mahler foregrounds a number of aesthetic features that demonstrate this subjectivity: formal disruption, parenthetical interpolation, gestures of rupture/collapse, and temporal stratification. This suggests a retreat inward toward an even more personal style.

More importantly, however, a quasi-autobiographical reading (without regard for authorial intent) allows for insights into the question of worldview. I turn once again to the insights of Ricoeur and his notion of “narrative identity.” To recapitulate some key points from the previous chapter: (1) worldviews provide an interpretive structure for existence by synthesizing the disparate elements of experience into a graspable whole; (2) likewise, narratives

⁸ Byron Almén, “The Sacrificed Hero: Creative Mythopoesis in Mahler’s *Wunderhorn* Symphonies,” in *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, ed. Byron Almén and Edward Pearsall, 135-69 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 135.

⁹ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 372.

constitute the most fundamental element of worldview by synthesizing isolated events into a singular, cohesive plot (Ricoeur calls this “emplotment”); and (3) narrative artworks, through the process of three-fold mimesis, emerge from an understanding of the world of action (mimesis₁: prefiguration), encode that understanding into the text (mimesis₂: configuration), and possess the potential to reshape our own narrative understanding (mimesis₃: refiguration). The transformative power of narratives stems from their function as worldview hypotheses. Sharing a homologous structure and function to worldviews themselves, narratives form the crux of a process through which a worldview emerges in an individual’s consciousness. Because of this, an examination of Mahler’s worldview and its relationship to his compositions must take into consideration the narratives found in his work. By analyzing the narrative aspects of his compositions, one may begin to understand how Mahler’s works reflect his worldview.

Narrative identity—treated briefly in the previous chapter—explicitly connects the synthetic-hermeneutic function of narrative with personal stories and notions of the self. In *Oneself as Another*, which takes up many of the themes Ricoeur first explored in *Time and Narrative*, he summarizes this concept:

[A]t the end of a long voyage through historical narrative and fictional narrative, I asked whether there existed a structure of experience capable of integrating the two great classes of narratives. I then formed the hypothesis according to which narrative identity, either that of a person or of a community, would be the sought-after place of this chiasm between history and fiction. Following the intuitive preunderstanding we have of these things, do we not consider human lives to be more readable when they have been interpreted in terms of the stories that people tell about them? And are not these life stories in turn made more intelligible when the narrative models of plots—borrowed from history or from fiction (drama or novel)—are applied to them? It therefore seems plausible to take the following chain of assertions as valid: self-understanding is an interpretation; interpretation of the self, in turn, finds in the narrative, among other signs and symbols, a privileged form of mediation; the latter borrows from history as well as from fiction, making a life story a fictional history or, if one prefers, a historical fiction, interweaving the historiographic style of biographies with the novelistic style of imaginary autobiographies.¹⁰

¹⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 114.

Narrative identity consists of the notion that self-understanding occurs primarily through narratives of the self. At this juncture, I will dispense with the awkward nomenclature of a “quasi-autobiographical” hermeneutic in favor of one centered on this concept of narrative identity.

But how does the transformative power of narrative apply to identity? The connection comes through Ricoeur’s discussion of plot as a model of “discordant concordance,” which he subsequently extends to character(s) within the plot: “[t]he thesis supported here will be that the identity of a character is comprehensible through the transfer to the character of the operation of emplotment, first applied to the action recounted; characters we will say, are themselves plots.”¹¹

He continues:

From this correlation *between* action and character in a narrative there results a dialectic *internal* to the character which is the exact corollary of the dialectic of concordance and discordance developed by the emplotment of action. The dialectic consists in the fact that, following the line of concordance, the character draws his or her singularity from the unity of life considered a temporal totality which is itself singular and distinguished from all others. Following the line of discordance, this temporal totality is threatened by the disruptive effect of the unforeseeable events that punctuate it (encounters, accidents, etc.). Because of the concordant-discordant synthesis, the contingency of the event contributes to the necessity, retroactive so to speak, of the history of a life, to which is equated the identity of the character. Thus chance is transmuted to fate. And the identity of the character emplotted, so to speak, can be understood only in terms of this dialectic.¹²

If narrative artworks constitute worldview hypotheses by presenting an “as if”—the suggestion that the world is *like this*—so do the characters of those narratives present potential modes of being: “[c]haracters in plays and novels are humans like us who think, speak, act, and suffer as we do. Insofar as the body as one’s own is a dimension of oneself, the imaginative variations *around* the corporeal condition are variations on the same self and its selfhood.”¹³ If a narrative

¹¹ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 143.

¹² *Ibid.*, 147.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 150.

work represents a way of viewing the world—with some basis in the author’s own life experiences—and if the character within that narrative represents a way of acting and being—derived from that same narrative pre-understanding—then it stands to reason that an analysis privileging narrative identity will, in fact, tell us something about the worldview of the implied author, whom the historian can evaluate in relationship to the actual, historical author.

THEORETICAL CONCERNS

Fundamentals of Musical Narrative

Given Ricoeur’s literary focus, can these insights translate into musical analysis? Answering this question requires an analytical method suited to tackling questions of musical narrative. Despite the abundance of programmatic interpretations of Mahler’s symphonies, there remains a surprising lack of discussion on how theories of musical narrative might shed new light on these works. Seth Monahan, in his significant monograph, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, argues, “we literally don’t *know* the symphonies as well as we may think we do, and certainly not on a level of detail that does justice either to their narrative complexity or to their coherence as an evolving corpus.”¹⁴ Following Monahan’s example, this chapter aims to further this effort toward such a course-correction, which necessarily involves a summary of relevant theories of musical narrative.

Byron Almén’s *A Theory of Musical Narrative* serves as a foundational text. In order to answer critical objections, Almén summarizes the common assumptions made by those skeptical of musical narrative: (1) narrative interpretations only arise when traditional models of analysis

¹⁴ Seth Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.

fail, (2) musical narratives only apply to explicitly programmatic music, and (3) narrative descriptions of music serve as derivative (and, thus, less effective) forms of literary analysis.¹⁵

Almén combats these criticisms first by reframing the relationship between the narratives of fiction and those of music:

To use a genealogical metaphor, I prefer a *sibling* model rather than a *descendant* model for articulating the relationship between musical and literary narrative. The *descendant model* presupposes a conceptual priority for literary narrative, while the *sibling model* distinguishes between a set of foundational principles common to all narrative media and principles unique to each medium.¹⁶

This distinction places investigations into musical narrative on equal footing with literary approaches, noting similarities while maintaining a clear distinction between disciplines. Even without the specificity of a program, musical works demonstrate a narrative design through their incorporation of hierarchical relationships subjected to processes of change over time.¹⁷

Certainly, unusual or complex musical structures lend themselves more readily to narrative explanation, but Almén demonstrates—through an analysis of Chopin’s Prelude in G major, op. 28, no. 3—how one might apply narrative analysis to an example of what one might ordinarily consider “absolute” music.

In addition to these basic reservations, Almén also addresses more substantial critiques of musical narrativity, particularly those of Jean-Jacques Nattiez. He identifies five arguments against musical narrative and addresses each one in turn. First, the “Verbal Cue Argument” maintains that only linguistic resources direct a listener toward hearing music narratively. Almén counters this by noting the ways that competent listeners can readily perceive dialectical conflicts among music elements (tempos, textures, tonal regions, etc.) as well as themes in the

¹⁵ Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 12.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

case of larger-scale formal structures such as sonata-allegro, neither of which require programmatic explanation.¹⁸ Second, the “Causality Argument” claims that literary narratives uniquely establish causal chains of events that music cannot replicate. But Almén notes that, even in literature, “[i]t is the observer who ultimately makes connections between events. There can be no unequivocally true or false explanations, only more or less convincing ones.”¹⁹

Drawing from Ricoeur’s insights discussed in the previous chapter, I would add that, due to the inescapable fact of temporal existence, human beings constantly infer causality in any temporally expressive medium, which one may easily extend to music.

The third and fourth arguments will gradually be addressed in the following discussion. To summarize, however, the “Narrator Argument” asks whether a narrative is possible without the presence of a narrator, a figure that serves to “(1) situate the related events in the past, as having already occurred, (2) organize the plot or story in a coherent manner, and (3) provide a mediator between the tale and the reader.”²⁰ He relates this to Carolyn Abbate’s argument, in *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*, that music lacks the past tense necessary to constitute a narrative. The “Referentiality Argument,” on the other hand, addresses the separation of music from literature due to the lack of specificity in its content—“we cannot specify *what* is acting or being acted upon.”²¹ A fifth and final critique—the “Drama Argument”—represents an attempt on the part of several theorists to situate musical narrative closer to the generic label of “drama” as opposed to “literature.” Almén maintains, however, that his “sibling model” bypasses these analogies, stating that an “accurate theory of musical narrative is one that recognizes both its commonalities (temporality, directedness, psychological

¹⁸ Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 29.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

and culture significance, hierarchical organization, conflict and emphasis on action) and its potential differences with respect to literature and drama.”²²

Almén emphasizes that any methodology for analyzing musical narratives “potentially involves the coordination of multiple tasks,” accounting for the use of musical gestures, motives, themes, topics, and any other relevant musical symbols in addition to more obvious elements such as descriptive titles, poetic texts, or written programs.²³ The foundation of his methodology, however, resides in the concept of “transvaluation,” a term taken from Jakób Liszka’s *The Semiotics of Myth*. He explains:

By *transvaluation*, Liszka refers to the following semiotic translation process: a hierarchy set up within a *system of signs* is subjected to change over time; this change, filtered through an observer’s design or purpose, is interpreted as being isomorphic to a change applied to a *cultural* hierarchy (whether social or psychological). Thus, narrative tracks the effect of transgressive shifts or conflicts on a prevailing cultural system, as inflected by that which is important to the observer.²⁴

One can assign relative hierarchical value to the elements of a musical composition, and by tracing those relationships over the course of the work, the transformations suggest a narrative. These hierarchies correspond to pre-established systems of rules and expectations, namely the conventions of tonal music:

When a system of musical signs is correlated with a system of ideas through signification, a hierarchy of values emerges. Since music, as a system of signs, comprises rule-like relations between elements, there exists by implication a normative way to enact such rules in conjunction with a hierarchy of musical elements. Because it is possible to break rules, the values enacted by the musical system are undermined, creating a conflict and leading to a crisis that subsequently enables the observer to reflect critically upon them.²⁵

²² Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 37.

²³ *Ibid.*, 38.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

The main task of a narrative interpretation “is thus equivalent to *determining what the narrative transgression is.*”²⁶ More importantly, these transvaluations may correspond to external, cultural hierarchies, which give explicit expression to the implicit narrative design.

If the interactions of these musical elements within the context of a musical system of rules and expectations create a narrative discourse, there must also exist, as in literature, a limited number of narrative possibilities. Almén refers to the literary theory of Northrop Frye, whose discussion of narrative archetypes influenced Liszka’s concept of transvaluation. Liszka breaks down Frye’s four narrative types into their basic, transvaluative properties: (1) Romance: “the *victory of an order-imposing hierarchy over its transgression (victory + order)*”; (2) Tragedy: “the *defeat of a transgression by an order-imposing hierarchy (defeat + transgression)*”; (3) Irony: “the *defeat of an order-imposing hierarchy by a transgression (defeat + order)*”; and (4) Comedy: “the *victory of a transgression over an order-imposing hierarchy (victory + transgression)*. Each archetype represents one specific combination of a pair of binary oppositions: order vs. transgression and victory vs. defeat.²⁷ Therefore, “[i]f one can articulate the prevailing oppositions within a work, and if one can observe how they are transvalued within that work, then one is articulating its narrative trajectory,” which should correspond to one of these four archetypal categories.²⁸

By synthesizing the ideas of Liszka, Micznik, and Eero Tarasti, Almén articulates a three-step analytical process. First, the analyst must identify hierarchical relationships among the musical elements, noting those of order-imposing and transgressive status. Second, those relationships should be traced throughout the temporal unfolding of the work, noting changes in

²⁶ Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 53.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 65, 66.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

the hierarchical structure of the elements. Third, this unfolding process will bear some resemblance to narrative archetypes, which will help in classifying the musical narrative.²⁹ Given narrative's importance in the formation and transmission of worldviews, Almén's theory allows for the extension of this type of analysis to musical works, and thus, to Mahler's middle-period symphonies.

Mahler and Musical Narrative

In *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, Monahan contends that scholars "have tended to revisit passages discussed extensively in earlier literature—often embroidering observations first made decades before—and even while vast symphonic expanses remain all but uncharted."³⁰ Over-eager to establish what he calls the "transsymphonic" narrative of the symphonies—that is, the totality of their multi-movement narrative arc—analysts often overlook integral details: "they are likely to pass over critical elements that are *not* evident on casual or even close listening—the sorts of 'deeper' patterns and processes that have long been the coin of the theorist's realm and which Mahlerians have generally been slow to pursue."³¹ Monahan takes a different path by dedicating his examination exclusively to Mahler's sonata forms. By limiting his scope, Monahan arrives at an important observation: "each of Mahler's sonatas engages in a kind of 'dialogue' with Beethovenian convention, one that is most often revealed in this close connection of modulatory processes and long-range expressive shaping."³² Far from the view of Mahler as a symphonic iconoclast, Monahan argues:

[A] surprisingly "traditional" concept of sonata form informs all of Mahler's early and middle-period symphonies—not as rigid or binding schema, but as a *paradigmatic tonal*

²⁹ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 224-25.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³² *Ibid.*, 4.

and thematic drama, one that was capable of underpinning Mahler's many highly individualized realizations. We will find, contrary to received wisdom, that the central teleology of the Enlightenment sonata—the resolution of long-range tonal tension—is a central concern in these works, and one that is intimately bound up with issues of expression and narrative arc.³³

Monahan draws on the theory of James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy to support the notion of a sonata-form “plot paradigm,” one that gains intertextual significance from the ways in which specific compositional tokens adhere or stray from an abstract sonata-form type. Such a paradigm stresses the importance of Mahler's dramatization of “long-range tonal/cadential strategies” as integral to the overall expressive effect of his sonata-form movements.³⁴ While the Fifth Symphony only includes one overt sonata form, Monahan's insights apply to all the movements individually and collectively. The analysis will attempt to examine each movement in terms of its own, singular narrative, which arises out of unique musical features.

Monahan provides two insightful concepts relevant to this study. The first is his notion of “recomposition,” referring to Mahler's tendency to “revisit and rework prior compositional strategies in new works,” noticeable as early as the Third Symphony. Similarly to Beethoven, Mahler's symphonies tend to alternate between those considered more experimental in their form (the First, Third, Fifth, Seventh, and Ninth) and those that, by comparison, demonstrate conservative tendencies (the Second, Fourth, Sixth, and Eighth). He notes, “major recompositions tend not to occur between adjacent works; Mahler was more likely to react *against* his most recent creations than to imitate or rework them.”³⁵ As Mahler continued to write symphonies, he drew from an increasingly enriched pool of techniques, strategies, and formal designs. Another insight comes out of Monahan's discussion of Mahlerian “plot types” among

³³ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 12.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

his sonata-form movements. Building on the idea of recomposition, these plot types bring to light “deep-organizational parallels” between symphonic movements that, on the surface, might appear quite dissimilar from one another.³⁶ For example, Monahan demonstrates that the sonata-form Finale of the Sixth Symphony “recomposes” aspects of the Sixth’s first movement as well as the first movement of the Third Symphony. On a continuum from experimental to conservative, he delineates three basic plot types: (1) “Epic,” described as “Novelistic form” with “embedded-sonata format” and “enormous tri-rotational organization”; (2) “Incurive”—“[h]ighly deformational” with a “secondary theme space subject to incursions”; and (3) “Classical,” which contains a “[n]ormative exposition/recap.”³⁷ Most importantly, these twin concepts of “recomposition” and “plot types” demonstrate a more fundamental truth: Mahler’s symphonies exist in dialogue with one another on a meta-symphonic level. This fact will play an important role in the final chapter of this study.

Monahan also evaluates Theodor W. Adorno’s highly influential contribution to Mahler scholarship and its relevance to narrative analysis. Although he fairly and convincingly criticizes the exaggerations and biases of Adorno, he also creatively synthesizes aspects of Adorno’s thought with the theory of Hepokoski and Darcy:

Adorno’s master trope of opposing impulses—that of “novelistic” freedom and “formalistic” restraint—can map suggestively onto Hepokoski and Darcy’s categories of “deformational” and “generic” construction, such that the emancipatory allegory of Adorno’s novel-symphony can be reimagined *as a function of the sonata drama itself*. That is to say, I will take up Hepokoski and Darcy’s view that the execution of sonata form can be a work’s central expressive/dramatic focus, but I shall often interpret Mahler’s dramatized departure from (or capitulation to) generic demands through an Adornian lens, hearing each movement as a real-time playing-out of the dialectic of freedom and determinism that Adorno thought so fundamental to this oeuvre.³⁸

³⁶ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 33.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 32. See, in particular, Monahan’s Figure 1.5, which visualizes the relationships between the various plot-type examples.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

The “novel-symphony” represents a bottom-up view of symphonic structure. Adorno believed Mahler created his musical forms out of the aggregate of surface-level musical events, similarly to the nineteenth-century novel.³⁹ Rejecting a dogmatic adherence to this view, Monahan proposes that the mediation between a bottom-up (Adorno) and top-down (Hepokoski and Darcy) approach to symphonic form represents an essential component of the dramatic tension in Mahler’s music. As a companion concept to the novel-symphony, Monahan also adopts Adorno’s conception of Mahlerian “variant technique,” where themes function similarly to characters that transform over the course of a narrative, retaining their identity while continually evolving across varied contexts.⁴⁰ Ultimately, Monahan derives four key contributions from Adorno’s work that inform the case studies of his monograph: “(1) the notion that each of the composer’s details is of consequence in the larger trajectory; (2) the concept of a contingent, processive form that sweeps along the remnants of earlier schematic paradigms like debris; (3) the mutually determinative and often antagonistic relationship of the part and the whole; and (4) the variant-form as narrative conduit.”⁴¹ To varying degrees, these principles will inform the case studies of this project, with the contributions of Almén and Monahan serving a jumping-off point for the analysis that follows.

The Fifth Symphony from Three Views

A completely thorough analysis of a work as gigantic and complex as the Fifth Symphony would be an enormous, potentially unending, task. Because of this, the following will serve as a rubric to focus the investigation with an emphasis on the symphony’s narrative

³⁹ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 39.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

qualities. The preceding discussion already presented two opposing approaches: the view from above (Hepokoski and Darcy) and the view from below (Adorno). Both will inform this study, but a middle way between those two extremes might best serve a narrative approach. Drawing inspiration from Ricoeur's discussion, the following analysis will privilege the insights found at the level of narrative configuration.

The View from Above

The high, formal view—though not at the level of “transsymphonic” narrative, as Monahan discussed—will focus on the individual narrative archetypes of each movement and of the three symphonic “Parts” that Mahler designated: Part I consisting of the first two movements, Part II consisting solely of the third movement, and Part III consisting of the final two movements. Before attempting to discern the overarching narrative across the totality of the symphony's five movements, I will consider each Part as a single entity, beginning with the broad features of its archetypal plot. An outline of the individual movement forms will highlight the major architectonic pieces that contribute to the expressive movement of the plot archetype. In addition to the insights of Monahan regarding sonata forms, Darcy's discussion of rotational forms will also serve the purpose of viewing these forms in terms of narrative. In his article, “Rotational Form, Teleological Genesis, and Fantasy-Projection in the Slow Movement of Mahler's Sixth Symphony,” Darcy explicitly connects rotational structures with narrative:

In its most common manifestations rotational form is a cyclical, repetitive process that begins by unfolding a series of differentiated motives or themes as a referential statement or “first rotation”; subsequent rotations recycle and rework all or most of the referential statement, normally retaining the sequential ordering of the selected musical ideas. In addition, it sometimes happens that a brief motivic gesture or hint planted in an early rotation grows larger in later rotations and is ultimately unfurled as the telos, or final structural goal, in the last rotation. Thus the successive rotations become a sort of generative matrix within which this telos is engendered, processed, nurtured, and brought

to full presence. As a result of this process of “teleological genesis,” the rotations may be construed—within the aesthetic of the time—as growing successively more “revelatory.”⁴²

Darcy suggests that rotational structure functions as an *Urprinzip*, determining the progress of a movement even more profoundly than the conventions of form.⁴³ The imposition of *Formenlehre* on Mahler results in “a strategy that produces an immediate and inevitable neutralizing effect, one that simultaneously reduces the processes of extraordinarily complex and subtle compositions to all-too-familiar formal categories”; instead, Darcy advocates for a “pluralistic approach.”⁴⁴ Monahan similarly views rotational form as a key element of Mahler’s approach, but he distinguishes between two types of rotation. While one can point to many examples of the kind of “(strongly implicative) rotational *process*” described by Darcy, Mahler also employed what Monahan refers to as “(non-implicative) rotational *patterning*,” which “address[es] Mahler’s use of the same loose modular ordering from section to section without viewing differences from the referential layout as the music’s leading source of meaning.”⁴⁵ This investigation will take into consideration whether or not rotational structures fall under the category of “process” or “patterning,” but in either case, understanding these structures will form a fundamental aspect of “view from above.”

The View from Below

Moving from the highest vantage point to the lowest, one finds a number of helpful theoretical concepts related to surface-level musical entities. Identifying and labeling motives

⁴² Warren Darcy, “Rotational Form, Teleological Genesis, and Fantasy-Projection in the Slow Movement of Mahler’s Sixth Symphony,” *19th-Century Music* 25, No. 1 (Summer 2001): 52.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴⁵ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 78.

and themes has long been an important aspect of musical analysis, and it remains so here. To these I will add the concepts of musical gestures, agents, and topics. Robert S. Hatten defines a musical gesture as an “energetic shaping through time . . . grounded in human affect and its communication—they are not merely the physical actions involved in producing a sound or series of sounds from a notated score, but the characteristic shaping that gives those sounds expressive meaning.”⁴⁶ Micznik views gestures as essential to understanding musical narrative, particularly in less tonally goal-oriented works. For example, she argues that Mahler’s Ninth demonstrates a higher degree of narrativity than Beethoven’s *Pastoral* in part because of its employment of musical gestures to “signify at the connotative level processes of accumulation, velocity, dissolution, disorientation, etc.”⁴⁷ Monahan, drawing from Hatten’s work, notes the importance of musical gesture as “energetic configurations that invite comparison with real-world actions,” and their ability to signify “expressive/psychodramatic processes.”⁴⁸ In other words, musical gestures encode aspects of real-world experience on both external and internal levels.

The concept of musical gestures (and, subsequently, musical agency) rests on the notion that the conventions of tonal music produce what Hatten calls a “virtual physical environment.” Drawing on the work of Steve Larson in *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*, Hatten demonstrates that, through the virtualization of physical forces known in real-world experience, composers can manipulate this environment to virtualize gestures. Larson identifies the virtual forces of gravity, magnetism, and inertia, which Hatten describes, stating:

⁴⁶ Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures Topics and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 93.

⁴⁷ Vera Micznik, “Music and Narrative Revisited: Degrees of Narrativity in Beethoven and Mahler,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 126, No. 2 (2001): 226.

⁴⁸ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 80.

Gravity, by analogy to our human experience, is the tendency to descend to a stable platform (stability here determined by tonal context). Magnetism is the tendency to move in either direction to the closest stable pitch in a given collection's alphabet, or scale. And inertia is the tendency of a given state, process, or patterning to continue. These forces can be mutually supportive, or they can counteract each other.⁴⁹

Hatten adds to these concepts those of musical momentum—an “implied injection of initial energy by an agent . . . to overcome not only the inertia of an object at rest but also such virtual environmental forces as gravity”—and friction—“the effect of any environmental medium (e.g., air) that acts as a drag and slows down achieved momentum (inertial motion).”⁵⁰ He also identifies five distinct functions of gestures: (1) spontaneous—“unique energetic shapes composers introduce that may appear as fresh and original inventions”; (2) dialogical refers to gestures that indicate “conversational” exchange between equally weighted musical entities (typically as in a String Quartet) or between unequal groups (as in a Classical concerto); (3) rhetorical—defined as “*any event that disrupts the unmarked flow of a musical discourse*”; (4) thematic—“[a] gesture becomes thematic when it is (a) *foregrounded as significant*, thereby gaining *identity* as a potential thematic entity, and then when it is (b) *used consistently*, typically as the *subject of a musical discourse*”; and (5) tropological—“possibilities that emerge from a creative fusion of different gestures.”⁵¹

A theory of virtual agency emerges naturally out of the theory of musical gestures. Hatten argues, “[w]henver listeners interpret a musical movement as an action, they are inferring a virtual actant as an individual source of the force, whether specified as human or not. Virtual agency is humanized whenever the listener can infer actions as willfully intended, expressed, or

⁴⁹ Robert S. Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency For Western Art Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2018), 47.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵¹ Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes*, 135-36.

experienced.”⁵² Almén emphasizes that the identification of musical agents forms an integral part of understanding the hierarchies within a musical narrative. Similarly, Monahan connects musical agency with Adorno’s “novel-symphony.” If the symphonies of Mahler possess novel-like features, the idea that their thematic/motivic resources function as characters forms a logical next step. These theme-characters—subject to the variation technique Adorno describes—act within and influence the musical discourse as it unfolds.⁵³ Michael Klein suggests, “[a]gency involves hearing music’s motives, rhythms, melodies, textures, and so on unfolding with an inner urgency or an act of will rather than from some mechanistic or determinative compositional process,” and he continues, “[t]he musical agent strives or yields, seeks goals or disavows them, persists or retreats.”⁵⁴

Lastly, topic theory forms an important aspect of surface-level investigation. Almén defines a musical topic as “a particular configuration of musical characteristics as correlating with a specific expressive domain.”⁵⁵ These characteristics stem from associations with a particular musical genre (as in certain dance-types, which carry distinct regional and/or class associations) or musical style (hunt, military, pastoral, learned, etc.).⁵⁶ Ascribing topical labels to musical features allows the interpreter to see, in the mutual interaction of such topics, the emergence of a narrative design. A composer may also merge two or more topics to create new expressive meanings out of traditional associations. Hatten calls this the “troping of topics,” defined as “the bringing together of two otherwise incompatible style types in a single location to

⁵² Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 65.

⁵³ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 40.

⁵⁴ Michael Klein, “Musical Story,” in *Music and Narrative since 1900*, ed. Michael L. Klein and Nicholas Reyland, 3-28 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 12.

⁵⁵ Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 72.

⁵⁶ Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 75.

produce a unique expressive meaning from their collision or fusion.”⁵⁷ Thus, as a rebuttal to the aforementioned “Referentiality argument,” theories of musical gestures, agents, and topics allow for the articulation, in specific terms, of the narrative qualities of the music.

The View from the Middle

Moving to the primary site of narrative communication, the level of musical discourse, the elements that make up the musical surface come together—are “grasped together” in Ricoeur’s terminology—into a musical plot. Whereas the discussion of narrative archetypes and musical forms concerns how pre-established narrative models might apply to a given movement, the musical plot—where the configurative act of emplotment takes place—focuses on the singular way in which a specific movement organizes its materials into a meaningful sequence. Literary theory and criticism may offer some important insights in this domain. Like Ricoeur, Robert L. Belknap, in his aptly named *Plots*, argues, “[p]lots are purposeful arrangements of experience.”⁵⁸ Discerning this purposeful arrangement requires a discussion of the elements of plots applicable to musical analysis. The primary unit of a plot—the incident—holds a significant place in Belknap’s monograph. Each incident contains a “tripartite” structure: situation, need, and action. Belknap explains:

[An incident] may be as large as a whole novel or as small as three sentences, it may be treated from the creator’s point of view as one of the building blocks for a text or as the generating entity whose transformation forms the text, it may be treated from the reader’s point of view as one of many components discovered by analysis or as the simple outcome of a summary, but the tripartite internal structure of an incident emerges near the center of the best investigations of this question, as it did when Aristotle characterized the plot of a good drama as something with a beginning, a middle, and an end.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes*, 68.

⁵⁸ Robert L. Belknap, *Plots* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 4.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 36; emphasis mine.

Alternatively, Belknap offers an even simpler definition of incident as a two-part structure: an expectation on the one hand, and its fulfillment or frustration on the other.⁶⁰ Either way, incidents serve as the basic units of transvaluation.

One of Belknap's most significant observations comes from one of his chapter titles: "Plots Are Fractal, Formed from Incidents That Are Formed from Smaller, Similarly Shaped Incidents."⁶¹ Following this observation, he explains the shift from the Classical "Unity of Action"—in which all incidents of the plot play a direct role in its outcome—toward Shakespearean "Parallelism": "Shakespeare sacrifices the tight integrity of the causal relationships between incidents in order to explore the parallels between two sets of incidents, provoking our awareness of the common elements."⁶² A plot may consist of many incidents, not necessarily related through causation, that consist of similar lower-level narrative structures. Belknap points to Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, which alternates between parallel incidents so consistently that, as Belknap observes, "[b]y the end of the fifth chapter, Dostoevsky has laid out the chief algorithm for creating or interpreting *Crime and Punishment*."⁶³ Musical rotations, therefore, function as incidents built out of smaller incidents (sub-rotations), which relate to each other in causal, "processive" ways (as in the Classical "Unity of Action") or as parallel "patterning" (as in Shakespearean parallel incidents). While leaving open the possibility that musical incidents might also include elements not directly related to rotations, such a framework provides a helpful musical analogue for understanding the relationship of incidents in music.

⁶⁰ Belknap, *Plots*, 39.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 46, 51.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 103.

But how do these incidents fit together? Hatten discusses one configurative technique with broad expressive implications, which he calls “shifts in the level of discourse”:

Levels of discourse are created in literature by shifting from direct to indirect discourse or narration. Music may signal analogous shifts, although not necessarily narrative ones, by means of certain extreme contrasts of style or stylistic register: successively (in which case the latter music seems to ‘comment’ upon the former), or interruptively (in which case an entity appropriate to a context is displaced by an inappropriate one).⁶⁴

Shifts in the level of discourse refer to meaningful discontinuities, unexpected changes or interruptions to the unmarked flow of musical discourse. Nicholas Reyland, in his exploration of narrative in twentieth-century music, argues that such discontinuities, “far from irrevocably damaging music’s potential to invoke acts of emplotment, might actually *enhance* music’s capacity to do this.”⁶⁵ Micznik arrives at a similar conclusion in her comparison of narrative degrees between Beethoven and Mahler. She argues, “the more individualized and semantically articulated the materials become, and the freer they remain from specifically musical forms, the more ‘natural’ or ‘closer to more general mental patterns’ (among which are narrative patterns) the music is likely to sound.”⁶⁶ Monahan echoes this notion with what he calls “affective state changes,” which he defines as “shifts between broad, expressively connotative musical fields.”⁶⁷ These shifts provide, in Monahan’s view, the mediation between the lower-level features of agency and gesture and the higher-level structures of form, encompassing broader, continuous stretches of music and, most significantly, their relationships to what came before and after.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 174.

⁶⁵ Nicholas Reyland, “Negation and Negotiation: Plotting Narrative through Literature and Music from Modernism to Postmodernism,” in *Music and Narrative since 1900*, ed. Michael L. Klein and Nicholas Reyland, 29-56 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 32.

⁶⁶ Micznik, “Music and Narrative Revisited,” 202.

⁶⁷ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 81.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

The coordination of the narrative techniques encountered thus far come together within a broader notion of temporality. Narrative works project what Ricoeur calls “imaginative variations” on the experience of time, which help individuals reconcile, or at least come to terms with, its inherent and unsolvable aporias. The act of emplotment itself creates “varied figures of discordant concordance, which go far beyond the temporal aspects of everyday experience, whether in the sphere of praxis or of pathos.”⁶⁹ Thus, for the reader, or analyst, such narratives hold two levels of interest: “[o]n the first level, our interest is concentrated on the work’s configuration. On the second level, our interest lies in the worldview and the temporal experience that this configuration projects outside of itself.”⁷⁰ Due to its inherently temporal character, music’s ability to create such “imaginative variations” appears just as rich and diverse as those found in literature. As Klein explains, “[t]emporality asks us to consider the possibility that music not only unfolds in time but also signifies time. We are alert to musical moments when time-as-meant rushes forward or stands still, flows or breaks, previews the future or recalls the past.”⁷¹

Almén and Hatten delineate several ways in which composers might defy, to varying degrees, the underlying and unmarked flow of time. Permutations, which alter sequences of musical materials in unexpected ways, can take the form of unusual developments of said material, additions to or subtractions from their content, or a reordering of musical events.⁷² Montage effects, “akin to the intercutting or layering of shots in a film,” also present a variety of techniques such as “disruption/interruption” (as in shifts in the level of discourse) or

⁶⁹ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, 101.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 101-2.

⁷¹ Klein, “Musical Story,” 12.

⁷² Byron Almén and Robert S. Hatten, “Narrative Engagement with Twentieth-Century Music: Possibilities and Limits,” in *Music and Narrative since 1900*, ed. Michael L. Klein and Nicholas Reyland, 59-85 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 65.

“stratification” (multiple simultaneous senses of time), which can reflect a stream-of-consciousness subjectivity or a dream-like surrealism.⁷³ Almén and Hatten also detail a number of techniques related to the “dissolution of temporality,” in which time becomes suspended.⁷⁴ Mahler’s music, at various points, utilizes all these games with temporality—a fact that has not escaped commentators. Adorno’s discussion of Mahler’s variant technique corresponds closely with the techniques of permutation, Floros observed Mahler’s tendency toward “montage effects” in his middle and late periods, and Richard Kaplan discussed how Mahler’s climaxes frequently involve temporal stratification through foreshadowing and reminiscence, bringing disparate parts of the work’s vast structure together in ways described by Almén and Hatten.⁷⁵

Fundamentally, narrative temporality consists of the relationship between two aspects of narrative: story and discourse. Micznik summarizes these categories, stating:

[T]he global narrative effect of a text emerges from the tension created between those two different time orders: the causal and chronological order and timespan of the events in the “story” (that is, of the events considered independently of the actual text) and the temporal order and actual reading time in which these events are “told” or “presented” in the discourse (that is, the ways in which the events actually unfold in the text).⁷⁶

In the literary school of Russian formalism, this dichotomy of “story” and “discourse” corresponds to the terms “*fabula*” and “*siuzhet*,” respectively. Belknap notes that, as the underlying story, the *fabula* “imitates the ordering of events in the life that nonfictional people live” while, as discourse, the *siuzhet* “has a manipulative or rhetorical structure, shaped to make the reader share and even participate in the action of the text.”⁷⁷ The *fabula* serves as a

⁷³ Almén and Hatten, “Narrative Engagement with Twentieth-Century Music,” 65-66.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 66.

⁷⁵ Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, ed. Reinhard G. Pauly, trans. Vernon and Jutta Wicker (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 1985), 137; Richard Kaplan, “Temporal Fusion and Climax in the Symphonies of Mahler,” *Journal of Musicology* 14, No. 2 (Spring 1996): 216.

⁷⁶ Micznik, “Music and Narrative Revisited,” 194.

⁷⁷ Belknap, *Plots*, 17-18.

background element of the text, but the *siuzhet*, as the “narrative fabric,” allows for the “imaginative variations” Ricoeur describes.⁷⁸ In musical terms, Hatten theorizes the “troping of temporalities,” which involves “the complex synthesis created when composers explore unexpected relationships between the expected location of musical events and the actual location where they appear, relative to one another and to their plausible dramatic sequence.”⁷⁹ This occurs when a rift opens between *fabula* and *siuzhet*. Hatten identifies three basic types of temporal troping: (1) “a contradiction between closural function and initiatory location”; (2) an “evolving theme,” which reverses the usual process by “beginning with pieces of a theme that only gradually come together into its definitive form”; and, most significantly, (3): “[w]hen a presumably continuous idea is broken off, or its clearly projected goal is evaded, as in certain rhetorical gestures or shifts in level of discourse, then there is also a sense of shift in temporality . . . By interrupting the unmarked or expected flow of events, time is problematized as neither strictly sequential nor smoothly continuous.”⁸⁰

The Complete Symphonic Narrative

This investigation will refrain from summary interpretations of the symphonic whole until the completion of the entire analysis, but discussion of the overall narrative sweep will gradually come to the fore as it proceeds. Even though Monahan maintains that “a series of contrasting movements, no matter how carefully arrayed, will tend to fall shy of being a *musical* plot in the most rigorous sense,” he also notes:

When Mahler deploys materials across movements, the result is rarely some bland or trivial “unification.” Rather, the effect is often to *intensify* our sense of the ontological rift

⁷⁸ Belknap, *Plots*, xviii.

⁷⁹ Robert S. Hatten, “The Troping of Temporality in Music,” in *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, ed. Byron Almén and Edward Pearsall, 62-75 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 62.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 66, 68.

between movements, to fashion the symphonic universe multidimensionally, as a series of insulated spaces subject to the occasional rupture, rather than as a simple linear continuum with temporal breaks between movements.⁸¹

These musical connections between movements “suggestively reinforce his music’s transcendent claims, in that they posit an ‘out there’ beyond the boundaries of immanent musical reality and its laws.”⁸² Mahler connects movements together in several ways: an “intermediary layer” of narrative (key relationships, framing tonics, etc.); motivic/thematic/structural connections; foreshadowing/flashbacks; and “Integrated Thematic Recurrences” (referring to “a single, clearly delimited theme [that] appears as a contextually unmarked element in *two different movements*”).⁸³ Most importantly, he observes that, in most cases, “*inner-movement* narrative threads point to one or the other of the outer movements. This means that the vast preponderance of Mahler’s narrative threads are directed toward the symphonic beginnings and endpoints.”⁸⁴ Donald Mitchell arrives at a similar conclusion in reference to Mahler’s use of a narrative frame. He notes that the symphonies generally consist of “a first movement outlining the start of a narrative or interior drama and a finale supplying the dénouement, the resolution of what has intentionally been left incomplete.”⁸⁵ Therefore, in order to investigate Mahler’s narrative designs at a deeper level, Monahan provides a rubric that this study will intend to follow: “our task is then to model the movement [or self-contained ‘Part’] *both* as a closed, self-contained plot and as a partly ‘open’ narrative—one whose internal events might be either (1) a response to happenings in earlier movements, or (2) the start of a new narrative thread, to be concluded in a

⁸¹ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 85, 86.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 86.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 86-88.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁸⁵ Donald Mitchell, “Mahler’s ‘Kammermusikton,’” in *The Mahler Companion*, ed. Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson, 217-35 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 217.

later one.”⁸⁶ With these considerations in mind, I now turn to the Fifth Symphony, perhaps Mahler’s most unusual symphonic design.

PART I: THE TRAGIC PAST

Overview: The Tragic Archetype

From the high vantage point of narrative archetype, Part I unambiguously falls into the category of tragedy. Comprising a third of the Symphony’s overall narrative, these two movements arguably constitute a complete narrative arc in their own right. But apart from the obvious fact that Part I begins and ends in a minor key, what features identify these two movements as tragic? To answer that question, Frye in his *Anatomy of Criticism*—which served as a major influence on Almén’s *Theory*—contends, “while a predominantly somber mood forms part of the unity of the tragic structure, concentrating on the mood does not intensify the tragic effect . . . The source of tragic effect must be sought, as Aristotle points out, in the tragic *mythos* or plot-structure.”⁸⁷ Almén summarizes tragic transvaluation as “the *defeat of a transgression* by an order-imposing hierarchy (*defeat + transgression*).”⁸⁸ Thus, identifying and tracing the relationships between the victorious order-imposing hierarchy and the defeated transgression within Part I will help establish its “tragic” status.

The most obvious place to begin deciphering these opposing forces would be the tonal regions of Part I. A cursory glance at these movements makes apparent the dominance of the minor mode throughout their duration. The first movement presents a series of almost

⁸⁶ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 90.

⁸⁷ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 207.

⁸⁸ Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 66.

exclusively minor-key tonalities: C-sharp/G-sharp minor (mm. 1-119, mm. 233-93, and mm. 400-15), B-flat/E-flat minor (mm. 155-233), and A/D minor (mm. 323-400). A relatively brief A-flat/D-flat major passage (appearing in mm. 120-51 and only in D-flat in mm. 294-316) forms the only substantially major-mode section of the first movement. The second movement contains a more narrative-driven tonal plot characteristic of a sonata-form structure. Interestingly, though, this plot does not primarily consist of the opposition of the primary and secondary tonal areas, which unfurl in A minor and F minor, respectively.⁸⁹ Rather, it involves the gradual, but increasingly forceful, emergence of a potentially triumphant major-key modality. This occurs in two passages, both functioning as sudden intrusions into the musical discourse, with the first serving as a preparation and the second as its fulfilment. First, Mahler presents us with a sequence of major-key tonalities—B major, A-flat major—leading toward a glimpse of A major in measures 316-21, but the beginning of the recapitulation disrupts this progression. The second passage corresponds to the D-major outburst beginning in measure 404, which represents the culmination of a narrative thread spanning both movements of Part I: the effort to overcome minor-mode dominance through major-mode disruption. In keeping with the tragic archetype, however, this climactic attempt fails to achieve lasting victory and is swallowed by the minor mode once again.

Although one can already see the tragic narrative at work in Part I, there are several hallmarks of this archetype worth mentioning. Frye notes that tragic stories, particularly in comparison to comedies, concentrate on the individual over and against the group. More precisely, the character at the center of a tragic drama usually possesses heroic qualities that set him apart from others. Simultaneously, however, “there is something else, something on the side

⁸⁹ The secondary theme does include brief tonicizations of major-key areas (in D-flat, beginning in m. 94, and A-flat, around m. 117), but these exceptions pale in comparison to the predominance of F minor.

of him opposite the audience, compared to which he is small. This something else may be called God, gods, fate, accident, fortune, necessity, circumstance, or any combination of these, but whatever it is the tragic hero is our mediator with it.”⁹⁰ In structural terms, the “something else” corresponds to the negatively-valued order-imposing hierarchy. Another important feature comes from Frye’s observation that “[t]ragedy seems to move up to an *Augenblick* or crucial moment from which point the road which might have been and the road to what will be can be simultaneously seen.”⁹¹ This clearly corresponds to the moment in Part I when the potential triumph of transgression—the D-major outburst—falters. This follows along similar lines to Belknap’s discussion of the Shakespearean “recognition scene.” He writes, “[a] recognition scene needs a lie or an error.” The lie in this case comes in the form of the false hope created by the major-mode sections.⁹² Belknap continues, “these elaborated lies take on lives of their own and introduce alternative plots in the dramas.”⁹³ This corresponds completely with Frye’s description of the *Augenblick* and certainly applies to the narrative climax of Part I.

One final point from Frye: while a tragic narrative may constitute a complete dramatic totality, it occasionally serves as component of a broader comic narrative. Summarizing the overarching argument of his essay, Frye postulates, “[i]f we are right in our suggestion that romance, tragedy, irony and comedy are all episodes in a total quest-myth, we can see how it is that comedy can contain a potential tragedy within itself.”⁹⁴ Of course, this reflects the relationship between the three Parts of the Fifth Symphony. Part I does indeed present a self-contained tragedy. But this fact does not exclude the possibility for its assumption into an even

⁹⁰ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 207.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁹² Belknap, *Plots*, 54.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁹⁴ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 215.

larger, comic narrative. In Frye's estimation, the inclusion of the tragic within the comic—taken together, in Hatten's terms, as a tragic-to-transcendent narrative trajectory—springs directly from a religious worldview: “[t]he sense of tragedy as a prelude to comedy seems almost inseparable from anything explicitly Christian,” and while Mahler's relationship with Christianity remained complex throughout his life—as demonstrated by the previous chapter—he nevertheless drew from its expressive well to suit his purposes.⁹⁵ Considering these various insights as a totality, then, one can hardly deny the presence of a tragic narrative at work within the Fifth Symphony's first Part, a fact confirmed by taking a closer look into the details of both of its movements.

I. Trauermarsch. In gemessenem Schritt. Streng. Wie ein Kondukt.

The View from Above: Formal Design

Because the Fifth Symphony's second movement fills the role typically played by a sonata-allegro first movement, what is the form of the opening *Trauermarsch*? One may simply describe it as a March with two Trios. Floros, among other scholars, identifies with this view stating, “[t]he movement shows a clear five-part structure: Main section (Part A)—Trio I (Part B)—Main section (Part A¹)—Trio II (Part B¹)—Coda (Part A²).”⁹⁶ He goes so far as to ascribe a “strictly symmetrical structure” and “formal perfection” to the movement.⁹⁷ Nadine Sine, on the other hand, argues for the existence of a sonata-form features within the movement, pointing to broad outlines of exposition (mm. 1-152), development (mm. 153-232), and recapitulation (mm.

⁹⁵ Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 28; Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 215.

⁹⁶ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 142.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 145.

233-415).⁹⁸ Robert Hopkins, however, points out that what Floros defines as the first “Main section” of the movement, actually consists of a smaller section repeated twice: first statement in measures 1-60 and second statement in measures 61-152. He argues, “[g]iven that fact, a formal description of AABABA would seem more apt.”⁹⁹ Hopkins forwards a view of this movement as a rounded binary form, and while the repetitions of the initial “A” section and the “B-A” sections do not consist of literal returns (every sectional return displays a high degree of variation), one can easily see the usefulness of this view. Thus, he parses the structure as A (mm. 1-60), A (mm. 61-152), B-A (mm. 153-316), and B-A (mm. 317-415).¹⁰⁰ And yet, there may remain another, more comprehensive way of articulating the form of this movement.

Although one can hardly dispense with the traditional label of “March and Trio,” viewing the *Trauermarsch* through the lens of rotational form confirms Hopkins’ basic view while highlighting some of the movement’s disruptive features. If a rotation, as Hepokoski and Darcy define it, consists of “a referential thematic pattern established as an ordered succession at the piece’s outset,” then one can conceptualize this movement, more or less, as four mostly continuous rotations of the Funeral March with two interruptions in the form of the Trio sections.¹⁰¹ As Hopkins established, this movement begins with two successive statements of the Funeral-March section. Most significantly, the articulation of the movement’s formal divisions exclusively depends on the return (or attempted return) of the Funeral-March’s opening idea, reinforcing the notion that “once we have arrived at the end of the thematic pattern, the next step

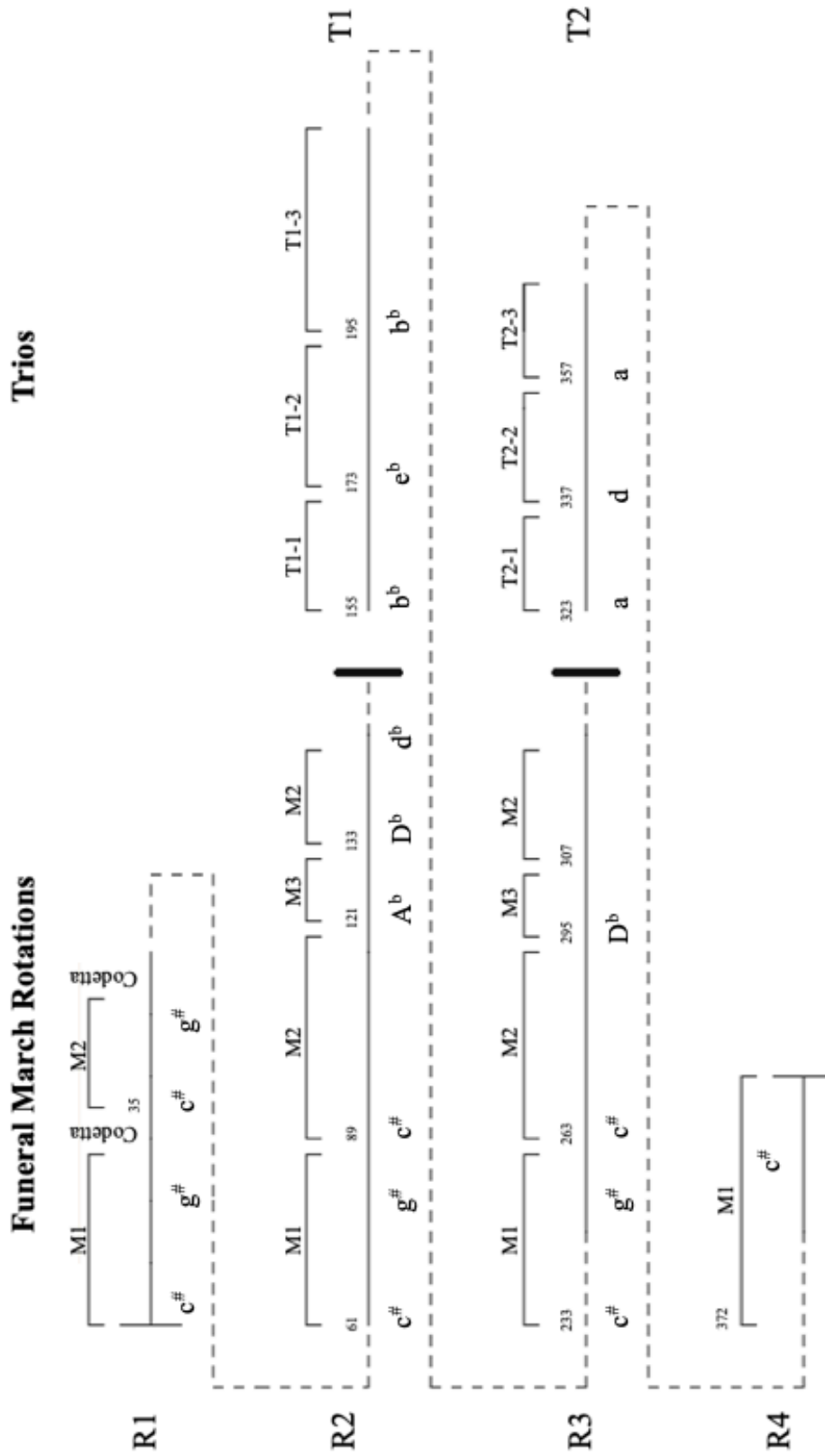
⁹⁸ Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 2, *Vienna: The Years of Challenge (1897-1904)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 809.

⁹⁹ Robert G. Hopkins, “Form in the First Movement of Mahler’s Fifth Symphony,” in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham, 235-52 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 240.

¹⁰⁰ Hopkins, “Form in the First Movement of Mahler’s Fifth Symphony,” 252.

¹⁰¹ James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 611.

Figure 2.1: First Movement Formal Diagram



will bring us back to its opening, or to a variant thereof, in order to initiate another (often modified) move through the configuration.”¹⁰² Figure 2.1 demonstrates how, under this rubric, rotational analysis reveals a fundamental conflict between the continuity of the Funeral-March rotations and the discontinuity of the Trios. Because the second rotation follows directly after the first, the listener may begin to anticipate that a third will begin immediately, according to Belknap’s notion of “plot algorithm.” A third rotation does eventually occur after Trio 1 subsides, and at this point, one may expect another interruption, an expectation that does go fulfilled in the form of Trio 2. The final “rotation,” if indeed that label fits, functions more like a coda than a complete return of the march material. But hearing the final measures as a last transformation of the rotation foregrounds the completion of a narrative arc.

The View from Below: Surface-Level Entities

In terms of gesture, one could easily spend considerable time discussing all the energetic musical shapes and their correspondence to various kinds of physical movement. Therefore, this brief look will highlight a few significant features that contribute to the movement’s expressive character. Throughout, one notices a significant number of gestures suggesting descent. These occur to such an extent that this gesture functions as an aesthetic *Gestalt* for the movement. Floros highlights this feature as a staple of Mahler’s output in general, stating, “[a] very characteristic ‘spatial’ tendency in Mahler’s music is the appearance of rapid and unexpected crashes of sound descending suddenly from the higher ranges down to the depths.”¹⁰³ While all iterations of this type serve as an example of virtual gravity, these gestures of descent take two

¹⁰² Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 611.

¹⁰³ Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler and the Symphony of the 19th Century*, trans. Neil K. Moran (Frankfurt am Main: PL Academic Research, 2014), 171.

forms: (1) *sinking*—either a thematic or spontaneous gesture featuring a gradual (usually chromatic) downward movement as if being pulled down; and (2) *collapse*—frequently a rhetorical gesture following a sudden rupture that breaks off the current discourse with a rapid plunge, suggesting freefall.

Sinking gestures of the thematic type form an integral part of the initial section of the Funeral March (labeled “M1” in Figure 2.1) with a descending chromatic trill in the strings and low winds: R1, measures 23-26; R2, measures 83-86; R3, measures 257-60. This also includes R4, but this version of M1 includes, due to its significant truncation and departure from previous iterations, a diatonic variant used in measures 393-400. One can point to other, spontaneous instances of *sinking* gestures. Some serve as isolated moments of expressivity, such as the passage from measures 140-44 featuring a slithering chromatic melody above *sinking* accompanimental lines. More frequently, however, *sinking* gestures play a thematic role as recurring motivic ideas. For example, the first of several appearances of chromatically sinking triplets occurs in measure 159, at the start of Trio 1 in the stopped horns. This simple idea carries interesting intertextual significance. Floros calls this motive an “*inferno triplet*,” noting its first use by Mahler in the Finale of the First Symphony. In that work, he argues, Mahler borrowed several musical symbols from Liszt’s *Dante Symphony* in order to represent the “*Inferno*” element of a movement that Mahler at one point titled *Dall’Inferno al Paradiso*.¹⁰⁴

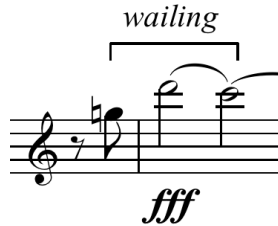
As for *collapse* gestures, more examples occur in the second movement than in the first. But the two moments of *collapse* from the *Trauermarsch* both come at the same structural moment: the dissolution of the Trios back into M1. For Trio 1, this takes place after the climactic build-up up toward measure 221, where an F-minor chord ruptures with a loud crash from the

¹⁰⁴ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 45.

percussion, sending the piccolo and violins chromatically spiraling downward, and dissolving over an extended period (mm. 222-32). Similarly, in Trio 2, Mahler superimposes features of *collapse* and *sinking* gestures by elongating the fall from a significant height through a gradual chromatic descent. This moment, measures 369-390, forms the climax of both Trio 2 and the movement as a whole. Interestingly, it closely resembles the end of Act II of Wagner's *Parsifal*. After the literal collapse of Klingsor's "Magic Garden," Parsifal addresses Kundry, singing "Du weißt, wo du mich wieder finden kannst!" ("You know where you can find me again!"), followed by a passage that strongly resembles the end of Trio II. Although he never conducted it, Mahler undoubtedly knew this score intimately as an ardent admirer and champion of Wagner's music. The intertextual connection of these moments of collapse, intentional or not, connects them as expressions of spiritual desolation. Despite the fact that Act II ends with Parsifal's defeat of Klingsor, it comes with the burden experiencing the suffering of Amfortas ("Durch Mitleid wissend," as the prophecy goes) and the sacred mission of restoration that lies ahead of him.

Perhaps the most significant gesture emerges out of the *collapse* of Trio 1 in measure 221. Its significance stems not only from the expressive role it plays but also in the way it exhibits several of the potential gestural functions as defined by Hatten. Although it begins as a spontaneous gesture, it gradually takes on a thematic role as an independent motive throughout Part I.

Example 2.1: Symphony No. 5/I, mm. 220-21



In another sense, this example also constitutes a tropological gesture, combining an energetic upward leap with the already well-established gesture of a *sigh* figure. In his analysis of the Fifth Symphony, Celestini Federico labels this gesture as “das Schrei-Motiv,” which I prefer to render as *wailing*.¹⁰⁵ The above example is not the motive’s first appearance—similar gestures occur earlier in the movement—nor does it constitute its definitive form (see the beginning of Trio 2).¹⁰⁶ This appearance of the *wailing* motive, however, brings the gesture into the foreground due to its coincidence with the collapse of Trio into the beginning of R3. Should one interpret this gesture merely as a non-human actant or as expressed by a human agent? The answer may be entirely context-specific. Whereas it appears to emanate from an agential source in the emotional context of Example 2.1, its role as an accompanimental element at the start of Trio 2 suggests an impersonal actant. In other words, Mahler uses the *wailing* motive as a human expression of grief that becomes absorbed into the tragic texture of Part I.

As with the gestures in this movement, one could point out multiple musical entities that display some degree of agency, but for this analysis, I will highlight two significant, dramatically

¹⁰⁵ Celestini Federico, “*Fünfte Symphonie*.” In *Gustav Mahler: Interpretationen seiner Werke*, vol. 2, edited by Peter Revers and Oliver Korte, 3-51 (Laaber, Germany: Laaber-Verlag, 2011), 18.

¹⁰⁶ One can trace its development prior to Trio 2 in three examples: (1) the E-C[#]-B segment of the violin melody in mm. 43-44 and other similar gestures found in M2; (2) in the quarter-note pick-up to m. 155 and the following two notes (see in particular the Flutes and Oboes), which begins Trio 1; and (3) the woodwinds in mm. 302-3 in a rhythmic variant of the basic gestural idea.

opposed, actors that drive the narrative of this movement. The first and most obvious example comes in the form of the opening trumpet solo that launches the entire symphony.

Example 2.2: Symphony No. 5/I, mm. 1-8



Not only does it signal the start of M1, the solo heralds the formal divisions of the movement. Hopkins observes, “[t]he analysts all take as the point of departure the many statements of the opening fanfare, which is used throughout the work both as a means of articulating the beginning of a section and as a means of effecting the transition to a new section.”¹⁰⁷ The character-like status of this musical entity comes not only in its initiation of each rotation but also by the subversion of those initiations due to the disruption of the Trios. The trumpet solo also demonstrates Adorno’s variant technique on the level of character through subtle changes in accordance with the overall dramatic context.

The second noteworthy agent occupies a less prominent role than the trumpet solo, particularly when considering the first movement alone. But what begins inconspicuously as a brief lyrical moment during Trio 1 gradually transforms into the most significant motive of the entire symphony.

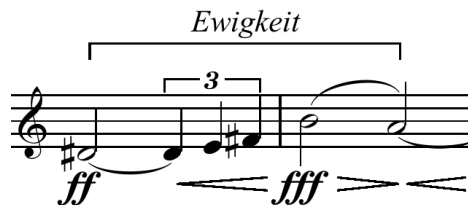
¹⁰⁷ Hopkins, “Form in the First Movement of Mahler’s Fifth Symphony,” 242.

Example 2.3: Symphony No. 5/I, mm. 203-10



Though fleeting, this G-flat major reprieve within the minor-dominated Trio points toward the possibility of salvation from the misery of this movement. The motive, then, serves as part of the “transgressive” element of Part I’s tragic narrative. One probably would not recognize it as such on first hearing, but the motive recurs with greater frequency in Trio 2. In measures 337-44, a solo horn twice intones the motive in a manner quite similar to the above example. A few measures later, the motive takes its definitive form as plea for salvation and promise of eternity or *Ewigkeit*:

Example 2.4: Symphony No. 5/I, mm. 367-68



The motivic label of *Ewigkeit*, attributable to Floros, stems from the fact that Mahler frequently utilizes this basic gestural shape in expressive contexts suggestive of eternity.¹⁰⁸ The step-wise

¹⁰⁸ The following chapter takes the “*Ewigkeit* motive” as its topic of investigation. Due to its frequent use throughout his *oeuvre*, Mahler imbues this musical idea with enormous significance. For the purposes of this analysis, the suggestion that it represents eternity, salvation, and redemption will sufficiently explain its role in the Fifth Symphony.

upward movement with which it begins demonstrates agential striving, culminating in an upward leap. Like the *wailing* motive, it also utilizes a sighing figure, and given the particular context, this sigh may be interpreted as negative (as in grief) or as positive (as in satisfaction).

Interestingly, by taking each of the half-notes from this example, one notices an implicit *wailing* motive within the *Ewigkeit* gesture. Consequently, the appearance of the *Ewigkeit* motive in this definitive form leads to the collapsing climax that brings about the end of the movement. While it seldom appears in the first movement, the motive clearly possesses great dramatic significance, which Mahler will exploit more extensively in later movements.

One could describe the central topic of the rotations in the way Mahler did, as a “*Trauermarsch*” or “Funeral March.” Looking more closely, however, one finds that this generic label actually emerges out of three distinct sub-topics. M1 most accurately falls under the heading of *fanfare* due to its militaristic, brass-heavy sound. This indicates the commemoration of a significant person—the tragic hero from Frye’s discussion. For the brief codetta that follows the first occurrence of M1 (measures 27-34), one might instead prefer the label of *cortège*. Mahler’s expressive direction, *Wie ein Kondukt* (“Like a cortège”), does not really apply to the exciting opening *fanfare* as much as it does to this short passage. The codetta possesses a processional quality with its heavy, plodding rhythms (Mahler directs the trombones to play *schwer* or “heavy”). For the *cortège*, Mahler foregrounds the percussion, most notably the tam-tam, and as Floros points out, “Mahler did not use the [tam-tam] as a coloristic element but consciously as a sound symbol of death and specifically several times with the intention of characterizing the passing of the dead and death.”¹⁰⁹ In contrast, M2’s markedly more lyrical quality might best be described as an *elegy*. If the *fanfare* announced the tragic hero and the

¹⁰⁹ Floros, *Gustav Mahler and the Symphony of the 19th Century*, 240-41.

cortège invoked his funeral procession, the *elegy* most certainly expresses mourning over the loss. The elegiac character of M2 carries over into M3, which emerges as a positive, major-mode alternative.

The explosive first Trio contrasts with the *Trauermarsch*, but it also subtly incorporates elements of the *cortège* (the syncopated trombone chords and simple tonic-dominant bass line), transformed dramatically by the faster tempo (*Plötzlich schneller. Leidenschaftlich. Wild.*—“Suddenly faster. Passionately. Wild.”). This results in a manic version of the *cortège*, combined with another trumpet solo—though one decidedly less *fanfare*-like. These rotational elements combine the operatic topic of *tempesta*, which Clive McClelland notes “was originally used to depict storms and other natural disasters (even if instigated or quelled by a supernatural entity). *Tempesta* was also employed metaphorically to show stormy emotions, as in the archetypal rage aria, or to accompany scenes involving flight or pursuit, and would also apply to mad scenes.”¹¹⁰ Some characteristics of *tempesta* include a fast tempo, stormy and agitated mood, minor tonality, disjunct melodies, rapid scale passages, and syncopated rhythms, all of which apply to Trio 1. McClelland notes associations of the *tempesta* topic with Hell or the infernal, and appropriately, Mahler’s *inferno triplets* make an appearance. The conflation of elements from the mournful *Trauermarsch* with a fiery *tempesta* exemplify Hatten’s notion of the troping of topics. Mahler generates Trio 1 out of the combination of these materials. The emergent meaning produced by this troping will depend upon certain configurational considerations to be discussed below.

Trio 2 also features the troping of several elements, drawing from the rotations as well as Trio 1. Specifically, it borrows the elegiac character M2, evoking a similar mood, and by featuring a string-heavy instrumentation (this applies only to M2’s R1 and R2 appearances). The

¹¹⁰ Clive McClelland, “*Ombra and Tempesta*,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka, 279-300 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 286.

second Trio's melody also strongly resembles, but does not exactly replicate, the trumpet solo from Trio 1 in an augmented version, as noted by Neville Cardus.¹¹¹ Trio 2 takes up the *Ewigkeit* motive and develops it into the definitive version that ultimately fails to break free from the tragic discourse. Mahler recontextualizes all these elements within an *ombra* topic. McClelland explains that *ombra* originated in opera and sacred music to express the strange, mysterious, or even supernatural. Frequently, "composers were aiming not only to depict horror but actually to convey an unsettling feeling to the audience, and the use of *ombra* was therefore highly effective as a rhetorical gesture in symphonies."¹¹² While Trio 2 does not correspond to all the features of *ombra*, it does share a number of its qualities: slow or moderate tempo, minor tonality, motivic repetition, and rhythmic syncopation. Most significantly, McClelland notes the use of "exclamatory, often fragmented, sometimes augmented/diminished leaps" and "sigh" motives.¹¹³ This corresponds to the presence of the *wailing* motive throughout Trio 2. Additionally, McClelland argues, "[s]trictly speaking, the term *ombra* should apply to scenes involving ghosts, but the musical style was appropriate to a wider set of circumstances," and such circumstances may include ceremonial or ritual music, as in funeral marches.¹¹⁴ Thus, the second Trio, like the first, tropes elements of the preceding discourse with a new topic to create a unique expressive environment.

The View from the Middle: Configuration of the Incidents

As Belknap notes, plots often contain fractals on the level of an incident, forming the basic narrative unit that further breaks down into smaller components of similar shape. One could set

¹¹¹ Neville Cardus, *Gustav Mahler: His Mind and His Music* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 159.

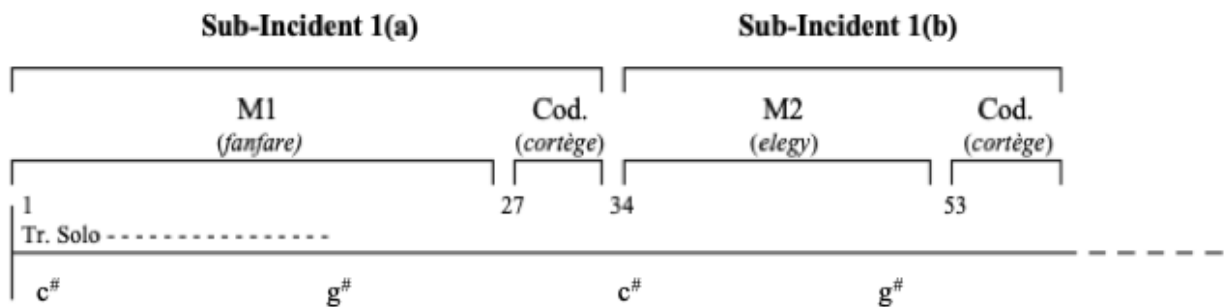
¹¹² McClelland, "Ombra and Tempesta," 279-80.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 282.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 286.

the analysis of a musical plot, then, at a variety of levels ranging from the totality of a movement down to its individual phrases. This analysis will attempt to maintain the investigation at the level of a rotation (considered as a complete incident), including its various components (considered as sub-incidents). When viewed in this way, one begins to see that this first movement plot consists of a number of sub-plots that develop over its narrative course.

Figure 2.2: Symphony No. 5/I, First Rotation



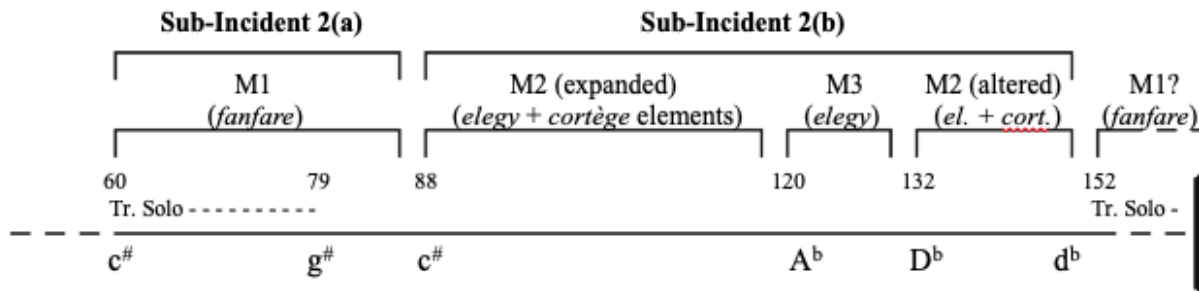
Incident 1 (mm. 1-60): As one might expect, the first incident functions as an introduction to the world of the narrative about to unfold. It contains two sub-incidents which resemble each other in length (26 mm. for M1 compared to 18 mm. for M2), tonality (both begin in C-sharp minor and modulate to G-sharp minor), and in their virtually identical codettas (mm. 27-34 and 53-59), but contrast greatly in virtually all other parameters: volume, orchestration, emotional content, etc. The symphony begins with a curtain-raising, rhetorical gesture, announcing the beginning of the narrative about to unfold in dramatic fashion. The agency of the lone trumpet initiates M1, *ex nihilo*, calling the Funeral March into being. As an agential theme-character, then, one might characterize it—to borrow Wagnerian nomenclature—as the *annunciation of death*. With the full force of the orchestra in measure 13, the blaring A-major chord (despite the decidedly C-sharp minor opening) might momentarily deceive us into anticipating a more

celebratory atmosphere. This quickly shatters with a sudden modulation to G-sharp minor and a confirming perfect authentic cadence (PAC) in measure 19. The A-major chord may hint at the symphony's overall comic narrative on a micro level, but more locally, it helps to establish, along with the *fanfare* topic, the mood of tragic heroism. This puts the movement in dialogue with a number of other precedents, including the *Marcia funebre* from Beethoven's *Eroica* and Wagner's funeral music for Siegfried in Act III of *Götterdämmerung*. And yet, Mahler's approach to the heroic funeral remains firmly rooted in the grim reality of death as evidenced by the closing codetta (mm. 27-34). The tam-tam, as a death-laden aural symbol, lurks in the background, as it will in subsequent appearances of the *cortège*.

The beginning of M2 immediately shifts back to C-sharp minor, signaling a point of arrival that differentiates it from M1 as a new, distinct entity. M2 differs in many respects from M1: slower tempo (*etwas gehaltener*), scaled-back orchestration featuring strings, and the *elegy* topic. These elements all suggest grief on a more personal, intimate level. M2, however, does not completely abandon the conventions of the *funeral march*. It retains a prominent use of dotted rhythms, sharp accented notes, and simple bass accompaniment. M2 also modulates rather quickly away from C-sharp minor to G-sharp minor, ending with a virtually identical codetta in measures 53-60 (once again, with tam-tam). Together, sub-incidents 1(a) and 1(b) express multiple aspects of the same thing: public and private grief over the loss of a noble person. As such, R1 functions as an exposition of the *dramatis personae* (although not all of them) that the ensuing discourse will feature. The return of the trumpet solo simultaneously completes the first incident and begins the second. In Belknap's terms, this return clarifies tripartite structure of the first incident: death as a reality (situation), the implicit desire to evade or alter this grim reality by cycling through other emotional states (need), and the failure of this attempt due to the return

of the *annunciation of death* (action). Thus, contained within this singular incident, Mahler encapsulates the essence of the entire unfolding drama of Part I.

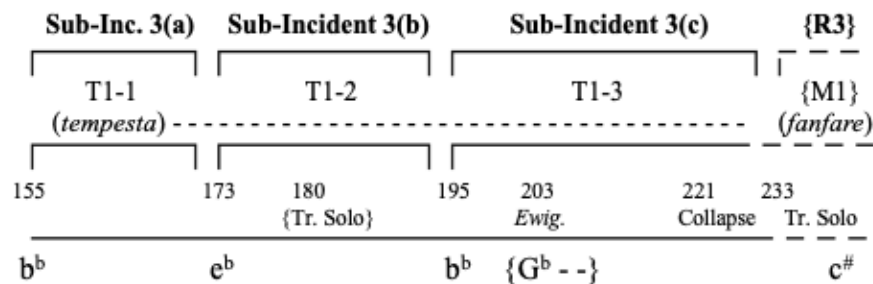
Figure 2.3: Symphony No. 5/I, Second Rotation



Incident 2 (mm. 60-154): The second incident begins to develop this plot in significant ways through changes to the basic rotational structure. M1 remains relatively unchanged in terms of its phrase organization, tonality (C-sharp minor to G-sharp minor), and duration. The most obvious difference comes with the fully orchestrated accompaniment to the trumpet solo. Despite what one might anticipate, this expanded version does not heighten the sense of heroism. To the contrary, it transforms the M1 *fanfare* from majestic to frantic. Mahler achieves this through the use of trills in the woodwinds and brass at measures 67-68 and in the low winds and strings in measures 73-74. The A-major chord reappears above those low rumblings, now in first inversion, but the din of the trills below and the blaring horns creates an entirely different effect. Mahler unleashes a new level of dissonance in the triplet blasts in measures 79-82, leading to the *sinking* gesture that ends M1 as it did before. However, the codetta does not appear, save for the rhythm of the bass drum, as the G-sharp minor chord dies away. Narratively, the overall effect of this return to M1 is one of intensification.

The major variants from the first rotation occur with the return of M2, now nearly doubled in length. Because of this, one can sub-divide M2 into two smaller units (mm. 88-104 and mm. 104-119, respectively). The first represents an intensification of M2's initial appearance in R1 with the addition of a new countermelody and, beginning in measure 97, chordal accompaniment in the horns reminiscent of the *cortège*. The second area makes this integration of the *cortège* topic even more explicit, shifting toward a wind and percussion sonority, including the return of the tam-tam. The viola's countermelody retains the sense of mourning, but overall, the character of M2 becomes permanently altered by its convergence with the *cortège*. The emergence of M3 constitutes the most radical departure. While retaining the *elegy* topic, the A-flat major tonality introduces the first major-key passage of the movement. Bounded on either side by the mournful M2, one might describe the narrative effect of M3 as a parenthetical moment of happiness. Its positive effect is demonstrated when M2 resumes in measure 132, continuing in D-flat major (the enharmonic parallel major of C-sharp minor) despite the presence of the *cortège*. Troubling signs remain, however, with the sinking melodic passage previously mentioned (mm. 140-45), the return of the codetta proper (145-151), and an unexpected resolution in D-flat minor. The start of the trumpet solo in measures 151-54 indicates another rotation will begin, but the sudden cut-off that follows propels the narrative in a new direction.

Figure 2.5: Symphony no. 5/I, Trio 1



Incident 3 (mm. 155-244): The incursion of Trio 1 breaks the rotational pattern with a dramatic change of key, tempo, and musical topic. This serves as an obvious example of a “shift in the level of discourse,” as discussed by Hatten. Such shifts suggest a commentary on the previous discourse, and one can only observe this at the level of narrative configuration, that is, the manner in which Mahler assembles his incidents. Commentary itself implies the presence of a persona that exists somewhat apart from the previous discourse. Given the chaotic nature of the music, one can only assume Trio 1 functions as a reaction against the implications of the *Trauermarsch* on the part of this persona. Obviously, this subverts expectations of how a Trio should function in such a movement. Mitchell describes this departure at length:

The trios in the ‘Trauermarsch’ turn tradition on its head. They come as a shock, and were no doubt designed to shock us into an awareness of the symphony’s principal issues and concerns, both dramatic and musical. The precipitating role played by these trios is to confront us with the symphony’s main business, the struggle to overcome, to conquer, the image or threat of implacable mortality that the funeral march itself represents. This is an extraordinary *reversal* of the customary role that a trio plays. In place of relaxation or relatively simple contrast we have two eruptions of protest *against* the implications of the march, eruptions which at the same time constitute a music or musics in often desperate search for a resolution of, or solution to, the fateful conflict.¹¹⁵

At this juncture, an important expressive component of Part I (and the Fifth as a whole) begins to emerge: disjunction as an aesthetic principle deeply connected to the narrative meaning of the work.

This disjunction radically separates the movement into two distinct worlds: (1) the objective narrative of the funeral march; and (2) the subjective commentary on that narrative by an implied narrator. Ricoeur illuminates this phenomenon in his discussion of the relationship between narrative and its narrator: “to narrate a story is already to ‘reflect upon’ the event narrated. For this reason, narrative ‘grasping together’ carries with it the capacity for distancing

¹¹⁵ Mitchell, “Eternity or Nothingness?” 33-34.

itself from its own production and in this way dividing itself in two.”¹¹⁶ In this regard, he mentions the work of Harald Weinrich and the first of his three “axes of communication,” known as the “speech situation,” which differentiates between the tense of narration—one of relaxation, easing of tension, detachment—and that of commenting or discussing—involving a greater level of tension or involvement.¹¹⁷ One can easily map this distinction onto the relationship of the rotations (as narrative) and Trio 1 (as story). As in speech, these tenses carry temporal implications as well. Ricoeur explains, “[e]very narrative—even of the future—speaks of the unreal *as if* it were past. How could we explain that narrative tenses are also those of memory, if there were not between narrative and memory some metaphorical relation produced by neutralization.”¹¹⁸ The rotational material, as narration, references a time prior to Trio 1, which itself comments on the past similarly to how one might reflect upon a memory. This example answers the critique of Nattiez and Abbate concerning the possibility of a narrator and the existence of a musical past tense. Without the shift in the level of discourse, one would not necessarily intuit the *Trauermarsch*’s pastness or the presence of a narrator. But this incident clarifies the dramatic situation through its shift from an objective, indirect narration to subjective, direct commentary. Of course, one could feasibly interpret the indirect-to-direct shift in terms other than past and present, but, as Ryan Kangas points out, drawing from Ricoeur, “mourning and remembrance are inextricably linked.”¹¹⁹ Therefore, Mahler moves from an objective remembrance to a subjective mourning as one moves from a memory of the past to the outpouring of grief in the present.

¹¹⁶ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, 61.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹¹⁸ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, 74.

¹¹⁹ Ryan R. Kangas, “Remembering Mahler: Music and Memory in Mahler’s Early Symphonies,” PhD diss. (University of Texas at Austin, 2009), 139.

The Trio unfolds as one continuous incident, gradually increasing in intensity through each of its three sub-incidents. Despite the obvious contrasts, one can discern the same tragic plot found in the rotations: a tragic situation, the need to overcome it, and the failure to achieve this desired outcome. Additionally, the music concerns itself with the same themes as the *Trauermarsch*, retaining several of its features (solo trumpet, pulsing chords, shared motives) but recast within a *tempesta* topic. In addition to the dramatic shift in the level of discourse, several other features point toward a more subjective style. The trumpet solo returns in the middle of the second sub-section (mm. 180-8) as if attempting, once more, to revert back to the rotational material. This produces the first climactic moment of the Trio from measures 189-194, which involves an intense warping of the temporal flow with horns instructed to rush forward (*precipitato*) followed immediately back a dramatic collective slow-down (*Pesante*), ending with a return to the quick tempo for the start of the third sub-section. Out of this chaos, the *Ewigkeit* motive makes its first appearance in a brief flash that Mahler nevertheless imbues with emotional gravity. The momentary tonicization of G-flat major comes as a surprise in the minor-dominated Trio, and Mahler scales back the level of polyphonic density that has characterized the discourse thus far. Of course, this moment of hope quickly turns back into a frenzy as the Trio builds up energy to the point of *collapse*, coinciding with the *wailing* motive seen in Example 2.1 and the return of the trumpet solo.

Incident 4 (mm. 232-322): The third rotation largely follows the same course as that of R2, with a few notable differences. First, a considerable amount of sectional overlap occurs between the end of Trio 1 and the beginning of M1. Mahler previously utilized this technique in the first movement of his Fourth Symphony between the end of the development and start of the recapitulation. Due to the temporal disparity between T1 and the *Trauermarsch*, however,

Mahler creates an even more jarring juxtaposition. Hatten and Almén label this temporal “stratification” in which two “stylistically informed temporalities”—in this case the *fanfare* and *tempesta* topics—occur simultaneously. This particular example exhibits traits of both subcategories of temporal stratification: “actorial” (the existence of more than one musical actor, as in the trumpet solo versus the implied consciousness of Trio 1) and “psychological montage” (overlapping streams of consciousness, as in past memory versus present reaction).¹²⁰

In the final appearance of M2, one observes the last stage of the transformative process begun in R2: the complete absorption of the *cortège* and dissolution of the *elegy* from M2. Now, the sonority consists almost entirely of winds and percussion (save for pizzicato in the basses the viola solo that doubles the trumpet). Lyricism gives way to the austerity of the wind band. With the addition of a trumpet solo in measures 279-93, M2 integrates this element of M1 as well. As before, M3 brightens this melancholy by emerging in D-flat major. And yet, Mahler foregrounds the *wailing* motive in measures 302-3 and 304-5 in the woodwinds to undermine this positivity. M2 returns, surprisingly, in D major. As the first occurrence of the Fifth’s ultimate tonal goal, Carolyn Baxendale views this tonicization as the first of several “premature attempts to establish this key, and as such contributes to a gradual transformation.”¹²¹ The end of M2 also quotes directly from the first song of Mahler’s *Kindertotenlieder*, “Nun will die Sonn’ so hell aufgeh’n,” written during the same summer that Mahler composed the *Trauermarsch*.¹²²

¹²⁰ Almén and Hatten, “Narrative Engagement with Twentieth-Century Music,” 66.

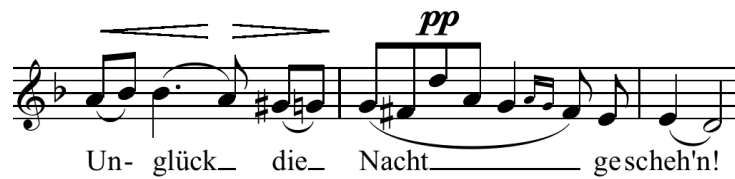
¹²¹ Carolyn Baxendale, “The Finale of Mahler’s Fifth Symphony: Long-Range Musical Thought,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 112, No. 2 (1986-1987): 263.

¹²² Hefling, “Song and symphony (II). From *Wunderhorn* to Rückert and the middle-period symphonies,” 111.

Example 2.5: Symphony No. 5/I, mm. 313-16



Example 2.6: *Kindertotenlieder*, I. “Nun will die Sonn so hell aufgeh’n,” mm. 13-15

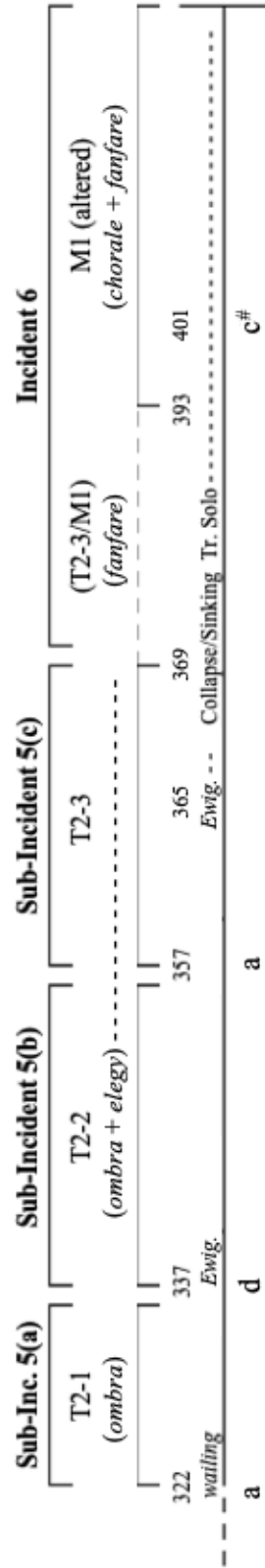


The text ironically juxtaposes the rising sun with the death of a child. This particular melodic quotation occurs at the end of three out of the four total couplets in the poem, the last of which exclaims, “Hail to the whole world’s gladdening light!”¹²³ The conflation of a dark subject with “gladdening light” also seems to suggest acceptance or abnegation.

Incident 5 (mm. 322-390): Although Trio 2’s interruption of R3 does not unleash the same degree of violence as that between Trio 1 and R2, the second Trio (Figure 2.5) still exists in a separate temporal-expressive zone from the rotations. Like Trio 1, it disrupts the potential emergence of another rotation, even though the timpani’s rendition of the solo trumpet’s music sounds weak and timid by comparison. Another clue comes from the collapse of Trio 2 into the final rotation, similarly to Trio 1, again suggesting temporal stratification. Likewise, Trio 2 unfolds as a continuous incident with three sub-incidents. The quiet, *ombra* beginning of Trio 2, considered as a commentary on the *Trauermarsch*, functions as an outpouring of grief and a plea

¹²³ Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 43.

Figure 2.5: Symphony No. 5/I, Trio 2 and Fourth Rotation



for redemption. Mahler achieves this primarily through extensive use of the *wailing* motive, now in its definitive form. Each sub-incident builds in intensity. Trio 2 begins quietly in A minor, anticipating the key of the second movement. The second sub-incident modulates to D minor (the negative pole of the Fifth's overall tonal destination) and re-introduces the *Ewigkeit* motive. The third sub-section returns to A minor as the *Ewigkeit* motive reaches its definitive statement (mm. 365-68) as a desperate cry just before the climactic *collapse*.

Incident 6 (mm. 376-415): Trio 2 overlaps considerably with the beginning of the final rotation (Figure 2.5). The remnants of the *collapse* continue as the solo trumpet appears for the last time. Although the solo trumpet returns with greater strength, it fails to achieve another complete rotation. Instead, it sinks into a solemn chorale (*Schwer*, measures 393-400), which returns to C-sharp minor. The final bars of the movement suggest a growing distance from the funeral music. The trumpet retreats further into the distance until a flute takes up the final *fanfare* figure at *ppp*. A low thud from the strings brings the movement to a close.

Preliminary Conclusions

What emerges from this narrative configuration? Mahler begins with a grim memory of death. The *Trauermarsch* represents a past tragedy, and although Mahler does not foreground a particular theme-character as the movement's protagonist, the discursive shifts seen in the Trio sections suggest a higher consciousness identified as the narrator. This persona recounts the memory while, simultaneously, continuing to struggle with it in the present (or, at least, some point later than the events narrated). Drawing from the work of Edward Cone and others, Hatten theorizes that listeners may infer a virtual subjectivity in which "virtual actors may appear to lose

their identity as characters in a drama and merge into a single virtual consciousness.”¹²⁴ This certainly applies to both Trios, which demonstrate the kind of interiorization that Hatten identifies with virtual subjectivity. More specifically, he identifies “romantic irony” or “self-reflectivity” as a potential cue for the presence of this higher-level subjective persona:

Self-reflectivity is achieved by means of shifts among levels of discourse that imply commentary or, in the case of romantic irony, outright dismissal of an ongoing discourse (and the consciousness it implies). Evidence for self-reflective thoughts and feelings may be found in the musical staging of narrative agency, in which a virtual narrator appears to comment on the discourse. At the level of subjectivity, such a narrator may be understood as the protagonist’s higher thoughts, reflecting on his or her own experience.¹²⁵

Undoubtedly, this corresponds to the kind of discursive, temporal, and emotional disruption presented by the Trios, both of which play an enormous role throughout the entire work. As Mitchell argues: “[e]ach trio, each in its own unique way, rehearses the drama that, at the outset, is the *raison d’être* of the symphony’s narrative: the attempt to counter and, finally, to dispel the sorrow, grief, and mourning that the ‘Trauermarsch’ represents.”¹²⁶ What Mitchell and other commentators do not argue, however, is that the presence of the Trios create a temporal disruption that, moving forward, forms an essential aspect of the Fifth’s meaning.

Viewed as a whole, then, the movement consists of several distinct, overlapping, and not always congruous, sub-plots: (1) the trumpet solo, serving as the *annunciation of death*, initiates the *Trauermarsch* with great strength, is undercut at various points, persists in a weakened state, and eventually recedes into the distance; (2) the *cortège*, standing for the reality of death itself (particularly through the use of the tam-tam), gradually infects the quiet mourning of M2, transforming it into a genuine funeral procession, as if the memory of this tragic event gradually becomes more vivid in the mind of the narrator; (3) the Trios present contrasting reactions (anger

¹²⁴ Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*, 23.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Mitchell, “Eternity or Nothingness?” 34.

and grief) against the tragic past that open a rift between the narrative and narrator, producing a temporal stratification; and (4) the *Ewigkeit* motive emerges as the potential for salvation but ultimately fails to achieve it. These last two sub-plots, in particular, will go on to play a role in the continuation of this tragic narrative during the second movement, and in this way, the first movement serves as an extensive introduction to the drama about to unfold.

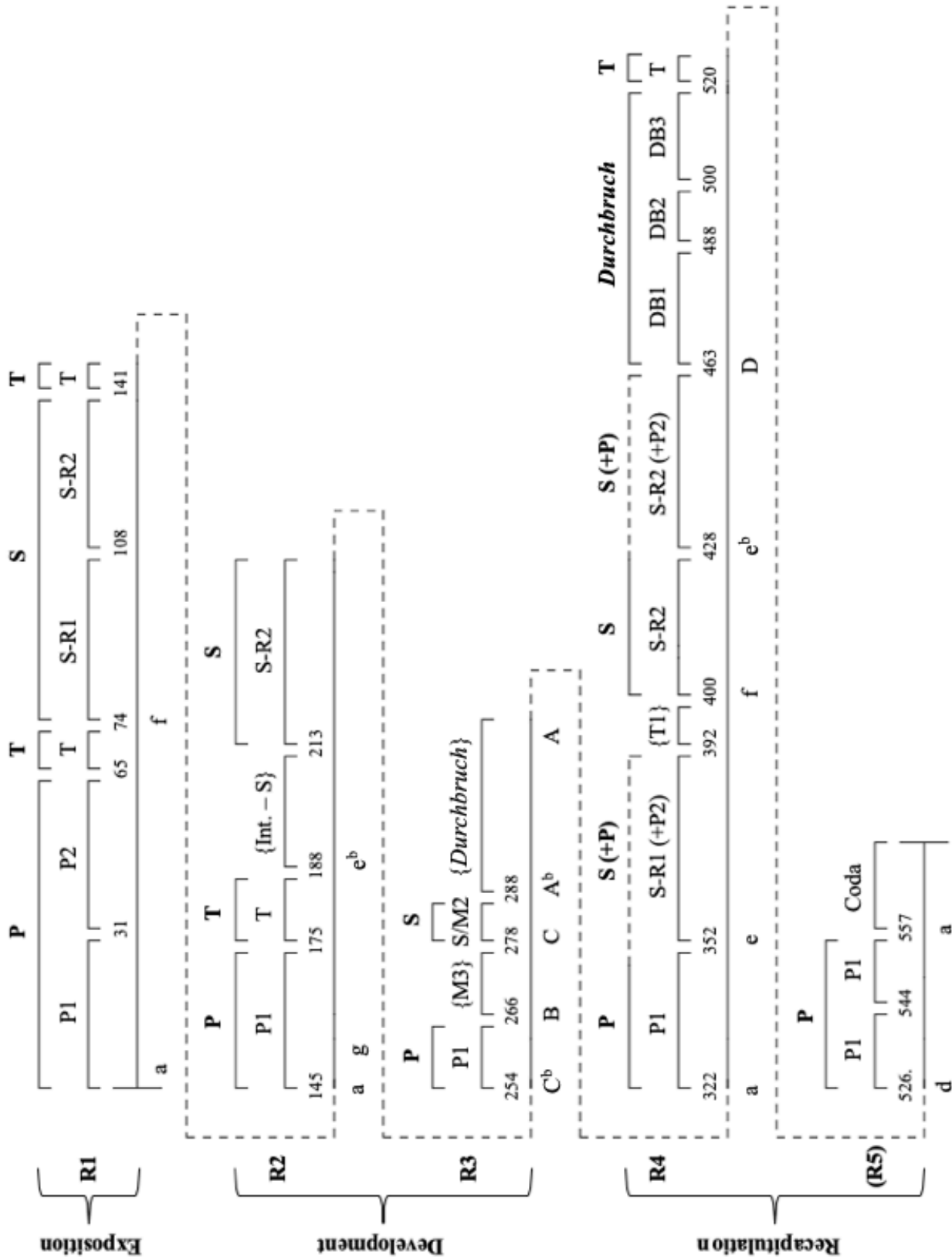
II. Stürmisch bewegt. Mit grösster Vehemenz.

The View from Above: Formal Design

The second movement corresponds to the conventions of sonata-allegro form. Despite some glaring irregularities, one can easily discern the major sections, which (mostly) fulfill their respective roles in the sonata-form drama. Once again, the consideration of rotational structures may help in visualizing how Mahler shapes and reworks the musical material. Concerning the existence of rotations within sonata forms, Hepokoski and Darcy note that “the relevant pattern is the exposition,” but simultaneously, “tonality is irrelevant to the task of identifying the rotational principle. The central thing is an implied or actualized ordered sweep through a temporal sequence of thematic modules.”¹²⁷ By examining this movement in terms of both sonata form and rotational structure, Mahler’s abrasive disruptions of these established patterns stand out all the more. This fact caused Monahan to categorize this Mahlerian movement as a representative of the “Incursive” type (along with the first movement of the Seventh Symphony) for its “highly deformational” characteristics, which Figure 2.6 demonstrates. Monahan explains this further, stating:

¹²⁷ Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 612.

Figure 2.6: Symphony No. 5/II, Second Formal Design



These [incursive] sonatas share a key feature: each draws actual or potential [secondary-theme] material from the non-sonata music that precedes it. But these borrowed musics consistently stand in a problematic relationship to the sonata that absorbs them—failing, for example, ever to be reconciled with the tonic key, and even leaving the movement vulnerable to violent and/or regressive incursions from without—hence, the name.¹²⁸

Monahan accurately describes the secondary theme's borrowing from the previous movement, but he does not acknowledge the primary theme's debts to the *Trauermarsch*. In fact, as the analysis will demonstrate, an astonishing amount of the second movement's materials recycle motivic/thematic elements from the first movement.

The exposition, setting out the basic rotational pattern, contains the expected contrasting themes (primary and secondary, "P" and "S"), each with a contrasting key (A minor and F minor) and separated by a very brief transition ("T"). Incidentally, this movement presents Mahler's only sonata form with two minor-key themes. All other sonata-form movements include a major-key contrast (or an alternative major key in the case of sonata-forms with two major-key themes), making this a unique movement in Mahler's *oeuvre*. The exposition does not include a closing section, instead moving directly into the development. The end of the exposition includes a denial of its primary tonal function: the "essential exposition closure" ("EEC"). Beginning in measure 133, Mahler builds expectation for this cadence by standing on the dominant of F minor, only to deny it with a fully-diminished seventh chord, which transitions into the first of the two developmental rotations.

R2 and R3 deviate from the established expositional pattern in two ways. First, these rotations severely truncate the expositional material, and R3 does this in an even more extreme manner than R2. Second, both rotations insert foreign musical materials into the discourse. Here, the aesthetic principle of disjunction, observed already in the first movement, reaches its zenith.

¹²⁸ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 33.

In R2, Mahler includes an extended interpolation that, while motivically related to S, disrupts the established flow of events. R3 contains an even greater number of abnormalities. The sudden cut-off of P comes in the form of a direct quotation from the first movement in measure 266. Mahler instructs, “*Plötzlich wieder bedeutend langsamer. (Tempo des ersten Satzes: Trauermarsch)*” (“Suddenly again significantly slower. [Tempo of the first movement: *Trauermarsch*]”), and most strikingly, the score includes a dramatic double-line between P and this quotation, rending the measure in two to distinguish the contrasting tempo. Specifically, Mahler quotes M3—the positive side of the *elegy* from the funeral march rotation. This neatly transitions back into the return of S and, thus, the rotation resumes. The return may seem strangely familiar because it reproduces the M3-M2 sequence from the first movement’s *Trauermarsch* quite closely, drawing our attention to M2’s similarities to S.

Another disjunction occurs with the first attempt at *Durchbruch* (“breakthrough”) beginning in measure 288. Going forward, I opt not to translate this term to emphasize its specific use in Mahler studies, beginning with Adorno. In *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, he defines the term as a “rupture,” which “originates from beyond the music’s intrinsic movement, intervening from outside.”¹²⁹ In other words, the *Durchbruch* functions as unearned salvation (grace), and while the preceding discourse may struggle toward this point of deliverance, its assurance must come from another, often transcendent, source. The second rotation effectively ends here, and the insertion of previously unheard (and major-key) material only heightens the sense of disjointedness. Given the tragic narrative archetype, this first attempt fails to produce the desired outcome, turning the brief achievement of A major into the A-minor recapitulation of the primary theme.

¹²⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 5.

In the recapitulation, Mahler distorts and breaks the rotational sequence even further. P begins similarly enough, but in measure 352, Mahler begins to fuse P and S together. Taking motivic elements from both themes, it becomes difficult to distinguish whether or not this passage functions as the recapitulation of S with P-motives or as an S-infused version of P. Another inter-movement rift opens in measure 392 with the quotation of Trio 1 of the first movement, which dissipates almost as quickly as it began, supplanted by an unambiguous recapitulation of S. Notably, the theme remains in F minor, unchanged from the exposition. The key changes again to E-flat minor in measure 428 during a new configuration of S and P materials that results in a negative climax, denying both the sonata principle (S does not return in the movement's tonic of A minor) and a satisfying "essential structural closure" (ESC). This negative climax directly precedes the D-major *Durchbruch*. And yet, the return of P in D minor seals the tragic fate of Part I in measure 520. In measure 557, the mysterious coda begins by slipping back into A minor (via diminished ii chord in the previous measure), completing the narrative archetype begun with the *Trauermarsch*.¹³⁰

The View from Below: Surface-Level Entities

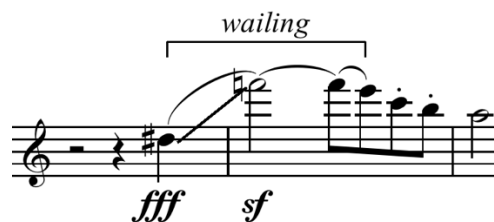
The second movement manifests a high level of continuity with the *Trauermarsch* by retaining several of its surface-level entities. One notices an abundance of descending gestures, specifically those of *collapse*. T consists entirely of structural *collapses* from one section into another, functioning both as a formal dividing line and as a technique for undercutting the discourse. Passages of *sinking* gestures, though less prevalent, can also be found (see the chromatically descending bass in mm. 43-52, for example). Another obvious gestural connection

¹³⁰ Figure 2.6 labels this entire final section R5. Similar to the first movement, it might be most beneficial (from a narrative standpoint) to think of this last appearance of P-material as a highly truncated, dissipating rotation.

comes with use of the *wailing* motive in the movement's opening measures (mm. 6-9 in the woodwinds). This gestural expression of grief from the first movement forms a central emotive feature of both P and S. As Richard Kaplan explains, “[w]hile the role of [the *wailing* motive] in the first movement is primarily accompaniment, it becomes the *Hauptmotif* of the main theme of the second . . . Subsequently, in various guises, it becomes either the basis of, or the accompaniment to, virtually every new melodic formulation in the movement.”¹³¹ Not just a unifying symbol, the *wailing* motive takes on an even greater significance because of its use, most astonishingly, in the context of the D-major *Durchbruch* through altering the leaping minor-ninth gesture into an octave in measures 463-64.

The simplicity of the *wailing* motive allows Mahler to connect it, tropologically, with other gestural-motivic ideas. Growing out of the *wailing* gesture, a new musical agent appears immediately following a three-fold statement of the *wailing* motive at the movement's outset. I call this the *fate* motive due to its suggestion of finality.

Example 2.7: Symphony No. 5/I, mm. 8-10



Frequently, as in its first appearance, the *fate* motive occurs at a point of cadence, and this forms a part of its agential function. It enacts, in microcosmic form, the narrative of Part I: the outcry of

¹³¹ Kaplan, “Temporal Fusion and Climax in the Symphonies of Gustav Mahler,” 228.

grief, dramatic suspense (literally and figuratively), and a sudden descent into tragic resolution. Another motive related to the *wailing* motive comes in the form of one already discussed. The *Ewigkeit* motive, confined to the Trio sections of the first movement, now appears in both primary and secondary themes. A P-complex variant occurs in the trumpets (mm. 44-46, in particular the five-note sequence D-E-F-B-A), suggesting a separate agency set against the simultaneously unfurling primary theme. Another version of the *Ewigkeit* motive from the secondary theme appears in the clarinets in measures 87-93. And finally, the *Ewigkeit* motive occurs in a manner similar to its initial manifestation in the *Trauermarch* in measures 116-19, solidifying the connection between these movements even further.

Another gesture derived from the first movement's Trio 2 emerges in definitive form during the secondary theme. This accompanimental figure, sounding in conjunction with the *wailing* motive, possesses its own expressive quality. The staccato, repeated triads begin with a sudden attack (*sf*), followed by a quick decrescendo.

Example 2.8: Symphony No. 5/II, mm. 74-75



Considered as a physical action, one could interpret this gesture as laughter.¹³² The minor tonality and emotional atmosphere of the music, however, suggest anything but good humor. Instead, this laughter takes a darker, ironic connotation. As such, I label this gesture *mocking*

¹³² One finds similar examples in Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. See specifically *Das Rheingold*, scene 1 in which the Rhine Maidens mock Alberich by laughing in repeated eighth-notes.

laughter, which indicates its bitter quality and, taken together with the *wailing* motive, encapsulates the bleak emotional environment of the secondary theme. Individually, these gestures function as distinct actants in the context of S, but together, they form an expressive textural fabric that serves as a backdrop to the plaintive secondary theme.

The primary and secondary themes, as one might expect, play an agential role in the sonata-form drama, but despite their contrasting characters, Mahler does not set these themes in direct conflict. Rather, they express two sides of the same coin. P thrusts us immediately into a world of turbulence, distress, and anger (as in Mahler’s instruction “*Mit grösster Vehemenz*”). In fact, one might describe P most accurately as confluence of disparate motives than as a recognizable theme.

Examples 2.9: Symphony No. 5/II, Independent P-Motives

P^{1.1} (“Hauptmotif”): mm. 1-4

rit. a tempo rit. a tempo

fff

P^{1.2}: mm. 21-24

sf sf

P²: mm. 34-40

sf < sf ff ff sf

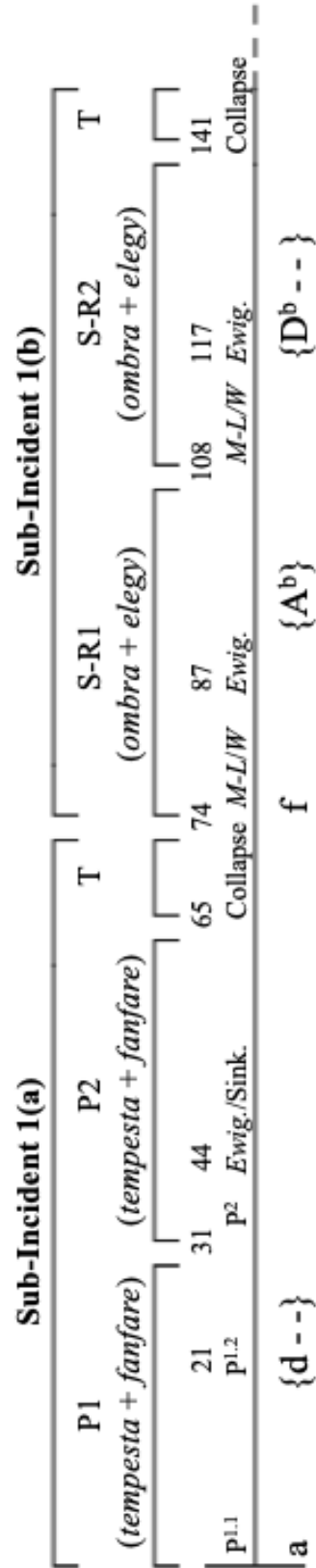
Topically, this stormy music recalls the *tempesta* of Trio 1 while the stark, punchy brass chords recall aspects of the *Trauermarsch*'s *fanfare*. The secondary theme, on the other hand, presents a more lyrical and genuinely thematic contrast, which, due to its accompanimental figures (*wailing* and *mocking laughter*) directly recalls Trio 2.

Example 2.10: Symphony No. 5/II, mm. 78-86



One can also detect the emotional world of M2's *elegy*, a comparison Mahler draws out himself with the inclusion of M3 and M2-like passage that follows (see Figure 2.9). Therefore, the two themes of the exposition grow out of the motivic, thematic, and topical materials of the Trios, as well as from those of the *Trauermarsch*. The conflict of the movement, then, does not stem from the opposition of these themes or from the conventional tonal plots of a sonata movement. Rather, the dramatic tension emerges from the elements that do not belong to the sonata structure: the interruptive quotations, on the one hand, and the attempts at *Durchbruch*, on the other. The moment of D-major *Durchbruch*, as well as the abortive attempt that came before it, constitutes the only other significant thematic idea of the movement. The topics associated with the transgressive elements consist of a *march* in the A-flat major passage (mm. 288-307), a *fanfare* that begins the D-major passage, and the brass *chorale*. All of these suggest a spiritual/heroic topical trope familiar from the *Wunderhorn* Symphonies.

Figure 2.7: Symphony No. 5/II, Exposition (R1)



Key:
M-L = Mocking Laughter
W = Wailing

The View from the Middle: Configuration of the Incidents

Incident 1 (mm. 1-145): Because both themes of the exposition draw considerably from the previous movement, the second movement narrative flows directly out of the *Trauermarsch*'s central conflict: a tormented present haunted by a tragic past, searching in vain for redemption. Mahler foregrounds the emotional content of the first movement's Trios, with P filling the role of Trio 1 as a violent reaction against the reality of death (Mahler's expressive direction: *Mit grösster Vehemenz*). The exposition of P divides into two sub-sections, but they seamlessly flow one to the next through a shared character of vented rage (Figure 2.7). The opening of the movement—two statements of P's *Hauptmotif* (P^{1.1}), separated by short pauses (punctuated by fully diminished ^{vii}/_v chords)—directly evokes the opening of Beethoven's Fifth.¹³³ Another similarity with that work comes from the primarily motive-driven discourse of P. In fact, the first subsection consists of a chaotic barrage of motives (including *wailing* and *fate*) desperately in search of the stability of a thematic idea. The opening eight measures appear to arrive at such a moment of stability with a PAC in measures 9-10, but this only unleashes another period of instability and the introduction of more P-motives. Another point of arrival at measure 31 (another PAC in A minor) begins the second sub-section and, at first, appears to provide a stable thematic discourse. As the texture becomes increasingly polyphonic with its continuous spinning-out of motives (now including the new, desperate form of the *Ewigkeit* motive in measures 44-46; see Example 2.7), one realizes that this stability will not last. In fact, Mahler's inclusion of the off-beat *sinking* gesture in the low woodwinds and strings (mm. 43-52) gives the impression of a freefall. Even after a standing-on-the-dominant in measures 61-64, Mahler

¹³³ Mahler indicates this with "*rit.*," followed by "*a tempo*" but includes a note to the conductor, stating, "[t]he sense of this *rit.* is, in both cases, a short pause, in order to drive toward the following chord with great force"; Gustav Mahler, *Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6 in Full Score* (New York: Dover, 1991), 45.

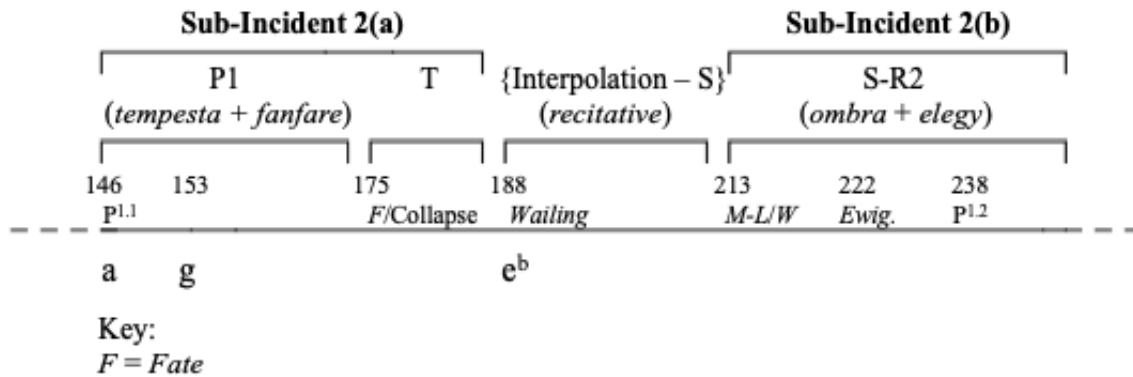
denies a final, cadential end to the primary theme. Instead, a *collapse* gesture (mm. 65-72), functioning as the transition, cuts off this closure with another statement of *fate*, chromatic figurations in the woodwinds, repetitions of the *wailing* motive, and a significant musical gesture Floros calls the “major-minor seal” (mm. 65-66).¹³⁴ This gesture occurs with the F-major chord that immediately descends to F-minor (the tritone of B natural also appears in the trumpets) as a seal of fate.

If P evokes the world of Trio 1, S even more directly restages Trio 2 with its troping of *elegy* and *ombra* elements. Mahler makes this explicit in his tempo direction: *Bedeutend langsamer (im Tempo des ersten Satzes “Trauermarsch”)* (“Significantly Slower” [in the tempo of the first movement “Funeral March”]). Because of this, S provides a much more stable thematic contrast. Simultaneously, two accompanimental gesture-motives—*wailing* and *mocking laughter*, both transported from Trio 2—serve as a foil to the lyrical melody. S functions as an expression of grief, made all the more bitter by the *mocking laughter*. Formally, it consists of a single sub-subsection played twice with some variation, meaning S contains two sub-rotations, each with a similar, though not entirely identical, modular sequence. The first module (mm. 74-94) begins in F minor with, essentially, a quotation of Trio 2. The *Ewigkeit* motive appears twice in the clarinets, reservedly in measures 87-89 (marked *etwas hervortretend* [somewhat prominent]) and more hopeful in measures 91-93 (now marked *hervortretend* [prominent]) as Mahler modulates to the first major-key tonicization of the movement, A-flat major. This begins the second module (mm. 95-108), which provides a lighter variation of these same musical elements. The second sub-rotation repeats these modules, but Mahler includes a parenthetical insertion of an A-flat major section, featuring the *Ewigkeit* motive in a guise that directly recalls

¹³⁴See Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 164, where he discusses this motive in the Sixth Symphony.

its initial appearance in the previous movement (mm. 116-19). The second module resumes in D-flat major, which quickly returns to F minor. The standing-on-the-dominant that begins in measure 133 suggests a potential Essential Expositional Closure (EEC). Mahler undercuts this convention with another *collapse* gesture—this time much shorter and over a diminished-seventh chord.

Figure 2.8: Symphony No. 5/II, First Developmental Rotation (R2)

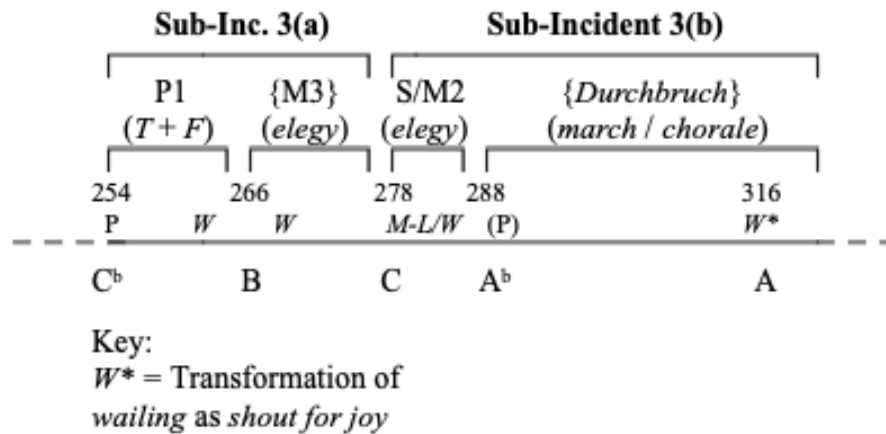


Incident 2 (mm. 146-253): The aesthetic of disjunction, already present in the exposition, becomes much more prominent in the two rotations of the development. In 2(a), Mahler develops P, specifically subsection P1, although this includes elements of P2 as well. This small example of integration and dramatic compression hints at an emergent *telos* that will become more obvious as the movement progresses: the reconciliation of disparate elements. As one may now suspect, a *collapse* suddenly disrupts P's development. This rotation expands the T-collapse even further with another major-minor seal (E-flat major to minor, with added tritone), *fate* motive, and spiraling chromatic woodwind figurations into silence, save for a *pp* timpani roll. Instead of moving directly into a development of S, Mahler includes a lengthy recitative-like interpolation (mm. 188-213), which develops the *wailing motive* in the cellos over

the sustained B-flat timpani pedal. Similar to the movement's opening, this passage stops and starts with short phrases separated by pauses indicated by fermatas and rests, creating a feeling of exhaustion along with the sense of isolation resulting from the sparse instrumentation.

Momentum slowly begins to build toward the return of S in measure 213, also compressed into a single sub-rotation (it most resembles the S-R2 from the exposition). Mitchell points out, however, that the *Ewigkeit* motive retains its more prominent Trio 1/2 guise initially seen in the parenthetical passage from the exposition (mm. 116-24).¹³⁵ As part of the integrative process, P-motives appear in the second module of the sub-rotation, intensifying toward an apparent climax that never materializes. Despite this anti-climax, there remains the implication that the integration of P and S will produce something climactic, potentially a *Durchbruch*.

Figure 2.9: Symphony No. 5/II, Second Development Rotation (R3)



Incident 3 (mm. 254-325): The second developmental rotation takes the aesthetic principles of dramatic compression, disjunction, and reconciliation to new levels of intensity. At

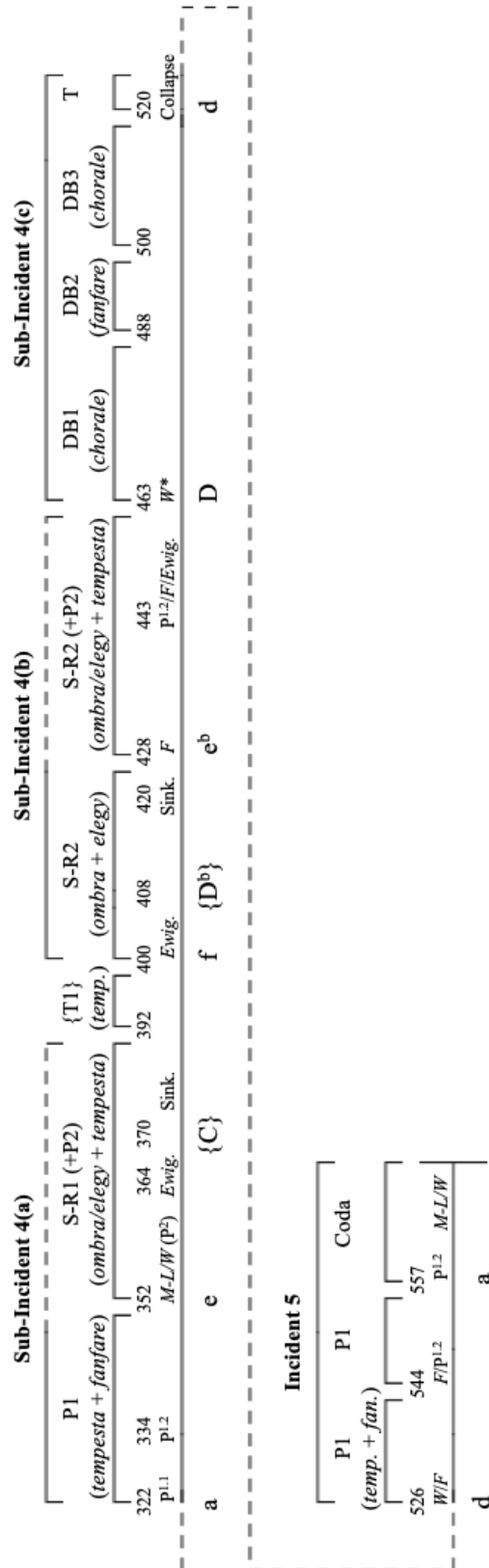
¹³⁵ Mitchell, "Eternity or Nothingness?" 34.

this point, one can easily observe the “processive” quality of the rotational incidents. As the integrative process tightens, new ruptures open up both backward- and forward-looking possibilities. P appears in an extremely truncated form, most unusually, in C-flat major. This short-lived passage is suddenly interrupted by a surprising direct quotation of the *Trauermarsch*’s M3. Mitchell dramatically describes this sudden transition, stating, “[it is] as if a door had shut on one orchestra, and opened on another, in another room where the ‘Trauermarsch’ is still in progress.”¹³⁶ The quotation serves as the sudden intrusion of memory. And although M3 represented a positive element within the *Trauermarsch*, its appearance here creates the uncanny effect of regression. M2 follows as it did in the first movement, but now, it functions as S in the rotation due to the close thematic/motivic relationship between the two sections. The new material that follows comes as a direct result of the appearance of M3’s positive memory of the past. *March*-like music (*Più mosso subito*) begins in measure 288 in A-flat major. By far the most hopeful passage of an extremely downcast movement, the *march* still contains motivic ideas related to P. At measure 308, Mahler indicates an acceleration (*Unmerklich drängend* [“imperceptibly hurrying”]) towards a possible *Durchbruch*. Growing more frantic, the key changes to A major, and the brass signal a possible moment of triumph. But once again, a *collapse* gesture destroys this hopeful vision with the *wailing* motive accompanied by another diminished-seventh sonority and a plunge into the recapitulation.

Incident 4 (mm. 322-525): Mahler continues to ramp-up discontinuities, and a cursory look at the recapitulation (Figure 2.10) immediately demonstrates a radical departure from its initial expositional appearance. Unlike the developmental rotations, R4 foregoes further compression of the rotational sections. Instead, it attempts to completely integrate P and S in

¹³⁶ Mitchell, “Eternity or Nothingness?” 41.

Figure 2.10: Symphony No. 5/II, Recapitulation (R4) and Coda (R5)



Sub-Incidents 4(a) and (b) by first introducing P or S alone, then producing an integrated version immediately afterward. The failure of the development to achieve *Durchbruch* leads to an even more chaotic first subsection of P. Mahler integrates small-scale *collapse* gestures into the texture at several points: (1) overlapping T-collapse with the start of the recapitulation (mm. 322-25); (2) chromatic falling trumpets (mm. 330-32); and (3) falling figures in the violins, flutes, and oboes (mm. 350-51). The second subsection appears to begin at measure 352 as before, but one soon realizes that the melody consists of a complete conflation of S with Trio 2 and, astonishingly, motivic elements of second subsection of P. In fact, it becomes difficult to label this stretch of music as P2, S, or as a Trio 2 quotation. Further, the accompanying motives include those from both P and S, creating a dense polyphonic texture. All of this plays out in E minor, defying the sonata-principle expectation of remaining in A minor. Mahler unambiguously recapitulates the second module of S's subrotation, without P-related motives, in C major. Another dramatic build-up occurs over a *sinking* gesture in the bass (mm. 379-85), leading to a full-throated statement of the *Ewigkeit* motive (mm. 387-89). Mahler then provides another substantial first-movement quotation (mm. 392-99) of Trio 1's opening. Although this music constituted a present-tense backlash against the *Trauermarsch* in the original context, here it appears like an unexpected flashback (similarly to the use of M3 in the development section).

This quotation quickly disintegrates with a return to S (m. 400), once again in F minor (defying the sonata principle). It begins with the parenthetical insertion of the *Ewigkeit* motive found in the second sub-rotation from the exposition, leading to the second module in D-flat major (m. 408). Another passage of build-up leads to the negative climax of the movement (build-up: mm. 420-27, and climax: mm. 428-35), which features the convergence of many of the movement's expressive elements: temporal compression/stretching (*Etwas drängend*,

followed by *Nicht eilen*, followed by *Wuchtig*, in the span of nine measures), rhythmically and orchestrally displaced *sinking* gestures, a subtle reference to the first movement's trumpet solo (mm. 420-23), *inferno triplets* (mm. 424-26), and repetitions of the *fate* motive (mm. 429-35). From the beginning of the negative climax (m. 428) to the emergence of the *chorale* (m. 463), one finds yet another passage that completely combines motives of P and S, the full expression of the suggested trajectory of integration seen earlier. Finally, the true moment of *Durchbruch* arrives, which reinterprets the gesture of *wailing* into a celebratory *shout of joy*. Despite the abruptness of the change of key (D major), tempo (*Pesante [Plötzlich etwas anhaltend]*), and topic (*chorale*), Mahler has prepared the way for this moment in the development section. Only after the complete integration of P and S, the implied goal of this sonata-plot, could this moment occur. The *Durchbruch* contains three subsections: (1) introduction of a new D-major theme (mm. 464-86); (2) *fanfare* and build-up to the climactic point (mm. 487-99); and (3) annunciation of the *chorale* theme—marked *Höhepunkt* in measure 500—and the gradual fade-out (mm. 500-19). As expected, this moment of spiritual uplift does not, and cannot, last. A final collapse occurs over a diminished chord, *Hauptmotif* references, *wailing*, and the sudden shift to D minor (a macro-level major-minor seal).

Incident 5 (mm. 526-76): The final section of the movement appears more like a coda than as another rotation, but viewing it in this way creates an interesting narrative parallel (as in Belknap's incident fractals) with the end of the first movement. Also, the substantial return of P1 in D minor functions like a regression back to the rotational order after seemingly breaking out of it. After the transitional collapse, the *fate* motive that occurs at measures 526-28 with a PAC in D minor puts the final nail in the coffin, so to speak. Then follows another rendition of P1, including a second *fate* confirmation (mm. 544-46), with an even louder crash of sound from the

percussion, featuring, most notably, the tam-tam (marked *fff* with the instruction *klängen lassen* [“let ring”]). This gradually fades as P-motives quietly spin out along with a plaintive contribution from the muted solo trumpet (evocative of the *Trauermarsch* ending). The final moments of Part I return to A minor and serve as closure for the entire two-movement drama. The unique texture of these measures includes pulsating minor thirds in the first violins and violas along with punctuated thirds on the harp, oboes, and flutes. The quiet return of the *fate*, *mocking laughter*, and *wailing* motives contribute to the uncanny atmosphere, along with the spectral sound of *glissandi* in the elongated *wailing* motives. The movement ends with an almost *Klangfarbenmelodie* iteration of the *wailing/fate* motives, distributed among the tuba, low strings, and timpani. The repeated use of the marking “*morendo*” in these final measures adequately summarizes the expressive content of the entire passage.

Part I: Conclusions

With both movements examined in detail, what is the overall narrative effect of Part I? Beyond the generalities of the tragic archetype, what does this particular configuration of incidents tell us? First, it demonstrates that this symphony is a story about time. Whereas the first movement presented a tragic vision of the past with reactive present-tense commentary, the second movement moves the drama into a present-tense haunted by the past. I offer this interpretation based on the following reasons: (1) the sudden outbreak of Trio 1 constitutes a dramatic shift in the level of discourse; (2) this shift implies, according to Hatten, the presence of a higher subjectivity (narrator), reflecting on previous discourse; (3) from Ricoeur (through Weinrich) one can infer a shift of discursive tense from indirect and detached (*Trauermarsch*) toward direct and emotional (Trio 1); and (4) the presence of a narrator, as well as narration

itself, imply a later reflection on events already transpired. I do not suggest that the *Trauermarsch* and Trios *literally* exist at two separate times. As Kangas argues in his discussion of the second movement of the Second Symphony, “[m]emory does not merely appear to us from our past, it is constructed in the present.”¹³⁷ In this sense, the *Trauermarsch* refers to the past in that it constitutes a memory of a past event, which produces an emotional reaction that pulls the narrator out of memory and into a present-tense emotional turmoil. The central conflict of Part I, then, exists between the order-imposing hierarchy of the tragic past and a transgressive attempt to overcome it. This leads to a second observation: the configuration of incidents foregrounds a subsidiary conflict between disjunction and conjunction, or instability and stability. A final point comes with the realization of a third, albeit subtle, narrative conflict: competing visions of deliverance from tragedy in the form of *Durchbruch*, on the one hand, and reconciliation (or integration of disparate elements), on the other. Mahler will continue to explore all three of these conflicting binaries—temporal, discursive, and redemptive—in the remaining two Parts of the symphony.

PART II: THE ROMANTIC PRESENT

Overview: The Romantic Archetype

The discrepancy between the world of Part I and that of Part II could hardly be greater. In order to make sense of their relationship, one should note that Mahler both implies and literally calls for a passage of time between them. The implication of time passed arises naturally out of our interpretation of Part I as a story about the conflict of past and present. Part II, then,

¹³⁷ Kangas, “Remembering Mahler,” 164.

continues the development of that story, and its removal from the expressive world of Part I heightens the feeling of having moved on to later events. Of course, a literal passage of time occurs naturally between autonomous movements, but Mahler enhances this further through his direction at the end of the second movement: “*folgt lange Pause*” (“a long pause follows”). Thus, there already exists a substantial break between Parts I and II, critical for understanding the work’s overall meaning.

Other differences enhance this separation. Apart from the Scherzo’s obvious major-key tonality and generally (though not entirely) cheerful character, this expressive gulf stems fundamentally from the change in narrative archetype. Interestingly, tragic and romantic narratives possess an identical transvaluation: the victory of an order-imposing hierarchy over a transgression.¹³⁸ The difference, then, falls to whether or not the audience perceives that victory as positive. Because the romantic archetype takes the positive view, Frye notes, it “is nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfillment dream,” resulting in a “child-like” or “naïve” quality.¹³⁹ These narratives put a particular emphasis on opposing characters (protagonist and antagonist) in which “everything is focused on a conflict between the hero and his enemy, and all the reader’s values are bound up with the hero.”¹⁴⁰ He explains further, “[t]he enemy is associated with winter, darkness, confusion, sterility, moribund life, and old age, and the hero with spring, dawn, order, fertility, vigor, and youth.”¹⁴¹ Considerably more so than in the other movements, Mahler foregrounds exactly this dichotomy between opposed forces.

¹³⁸ Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 97.

¹³⁹ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 186.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 187-88.

A few other features from Frye's discussion apply to this movement. First, part of the child-like character of the romance involves its "extraordinarily persistent nostalgia."¹⁴² In keeping with this, Mahler, whose affinity for the child-like one can easily observe in his Fourth Symphony, reproduces that emotional realm in various ways in this movement. Related to this, Frye notes, "[a]t its most naïve [romance] is an endless form in which a central character who never develops or ages goes through one adventure after another until the author himself collapses."¹⁴³ This only partially applies here. While it does begin and end with an order-imposing hierarchy, the Scherzo also features an important transformation of that hierarchy. Simultaneously, it does indeed include a more episodic plot with rotations falling into the "patterning" rather than "processive" category of plot paradigm. Finally, "[i]n romance the central theme . . . is that of the maintaining the integrity of the innocent world against the assault of experience."¹⁴⁴ In keeping with this theme, Mahler draws out the opposition of innocence and experience in the two Trio sections. Given the Scherzo's placement between the tragedy of Part I and the jubilation of Part III, this movement forms the pivot point of the entire work and contains several keys to the symphony's meaning.

III. Scherzo. Kräftig, nicht zu schnell.

The View from Above: Formal Design

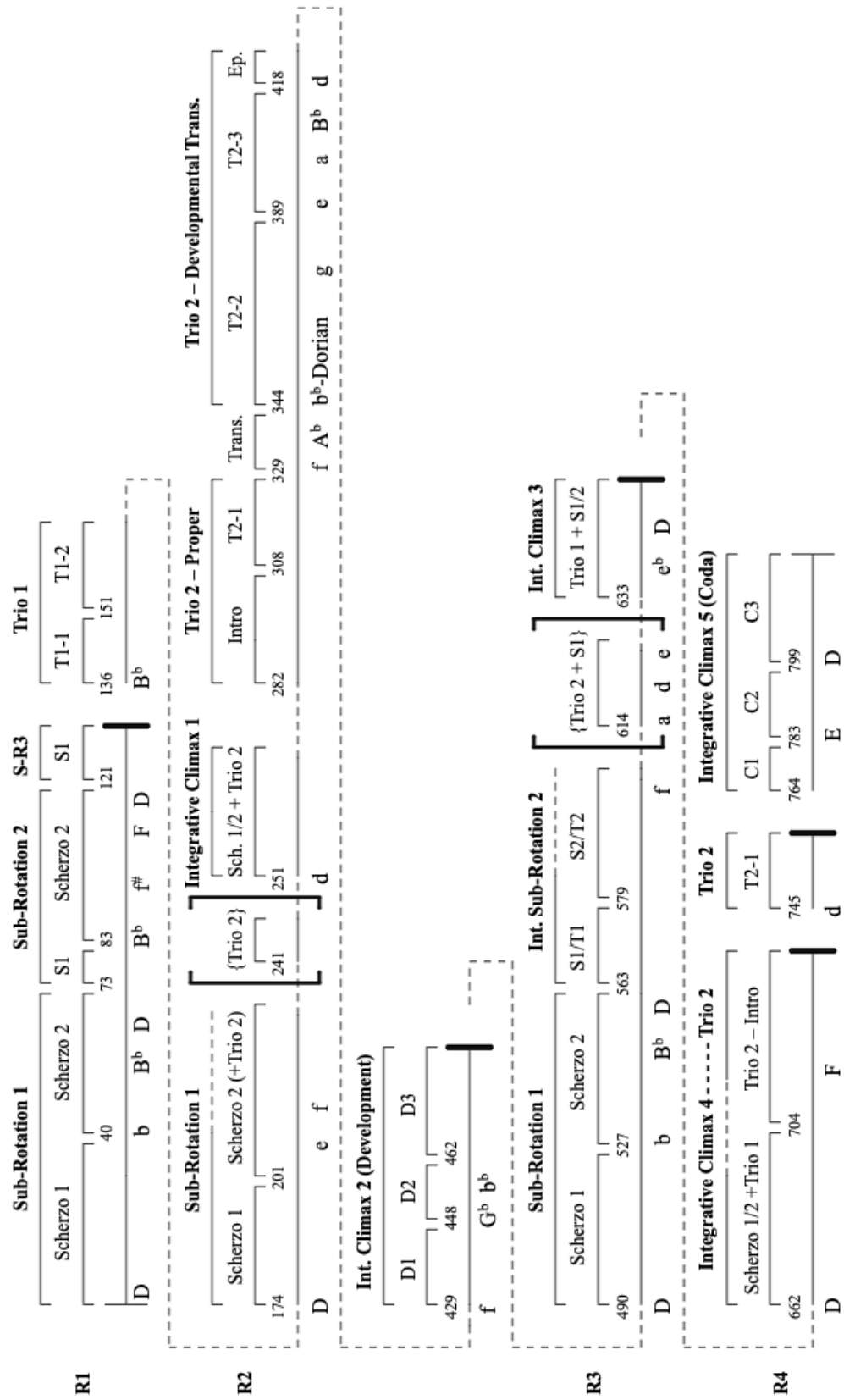
The form of this Scherzo presents considerable problems. The basic pattern does indeed reflect elements of a typical Scherzo and Trio, but the glaring irregularities—most obviously the

¹⁴² Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 186.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 201.

Figure 2.11: Symphony No. 5/III, Formal Design



movement's length and complexity—confront the analyst with the fact that it will not easily fit into any pre-conceived form. All labels will, ultimately, fail to capture fully its unique characteristics. What follows, then, is an attempt to explain the movement as completely as possible while, simultaneously, acknowledging these difficult areas. In the broadest view, the movement consists of the alternation between a main Scherzo section and two contrasting Trios. As in Part I's tendency to move the musical materials toward reconciliation through integration, Mahler begins to blur the lines between these groups, which makes the task of clearly delineating sections quite difficult. Organizing the structure in terms of rotational form hardly clarifies this problem (Figure 2.11). The first rotation of the Scherzo (R1) alternates between "Scherzo 1" (S1) and "Scherzo 2" (S2). S1 presents the main Scherzo theme in a surprisingly stable D major, and S2 undermines that stability by exploring other tonal regions, only to return once more to D major. This simple pattern represents a microcosmic version of the romance archetype (stability—instability—stability) and functions as a sub-rotation within the basic rotational unit. The initial repetition of this sub-rotation retains the same format while truncating the initial D-major stability. It appears the pattern will repeat a third time (S-R3) before a sudden shift in the level of discourse begins the first Trio in B-flat major.

The second rotation begins as expected with the return of the basic sub-rotational patterning. Quickly, however, things become more complicated. S2 anticipates material that will appear in Trio 2, but in hindsight, one can see this does not constitute the actual start of the second trio. Rather, Mahler inserts a partial Trio 2 parenthetically within the rotational discourse. R2 then resumes with a new section, the first of several passages of "Integrative Climax." At this point, Mahler takes up the unresolved aesthetic goal of reconciliation from Part I. Each of the five "Integrative Climaxes" found throughout the Scherzo attempts to synthesize the primary

thematic/motivic materials of the movement. In R2, this section integrates elements of S1 and S2 with the new ideas of Trio 2, which has yet to be heard in its entirety. An introductory section leads, finally, into Trio 2 proper—that is, Trio 2 in its most definitive form. Trio 2 represents one of the stumbling blocks to understanding the movement’s form. While thematically unified, it unfolds in several stages and starts to develop its materials almost immediately, as seen in the extensive passage following “Trio 2 Proper” (mm. 344-428). The purely developmental section that follows (mm. 429-89) does not itself constitute a rotational return, but it also exists distinctly from Trio 2. Because of its integration of all thematic elements of the movement, it functions similarly to a sonata-form’s development (although the notion of sonata-allegro form does not adequately describe the movement as a whole).

Similarly, R3’s return in D major evokes a recapitulatory space, but Mahler saves his more daring developmental and integrative processes for the remainder of the movement. The familiar sub-rotational pattern begins this rotation, but the second sub-rotation complicates the matter by including combinations of S1/Trio 1 and S2/Trio 2. As in R2, this leads to a parenthetical insertion of Trio 2 material (now including S1 motives), which in turn, brings about the third “Integrative Climax,” combining Trio 1 with both S1 and S2. A sudden cut-off of this climax resets the integrative process, leading to a fourth rotation. Mahler dispenses with the sub-rotational pattern in order to move into even more intricate motivic combinations of the materials. The fourth “Integrative Climax” actually restages the first one by including a sectional elision between the S1/S2/Trio 1 integration and the introductory section to Trio 2. After a brief repetition of “Trio 2 Proper,” Mahler begins the final “Integrative Climax,” which also serves as the movement’s coda. Whereas the four previous sections of integration only managed to

synthesize three out of the four thematic groups, the final climax completes the reconciliation of all four elements in a single, D major, musical flourish.

The View from Below: Surface-Level Entities

Because the form of this movement arises primarily out of the interaction of four distinct musical discourses—S1, S2, Trio 1, and Trio 2—this section will primarily account for the expressive qualities of each of these, highlighting the most important aspects of their gestures, agents, and topics. S1 begins with an opening gesture that serves as the principal thematic idea of this section.

Example 2.11: Symphony No. 5/III, mm. 1-8



Mahler packs quite a lot into this idea with an implicit reference to the redeemed form of the *wailing* motive (first, fourth, and fifth dotted lines) as well as the *Ewigkeit* motive (all dotted lines). Gesturally speaking, the small upward leap followed by a downward plunge suggests a jump from a great height, perhaps as an attempt to escape the dramatic implications of Part I. The subsequent race upward (marked *acc.*) scales an even greater height, as though striving toward the transcendent through the force of will. Mahler begins this movement with a display of great strength (the tempo indication of *Kräftig* and the horns’ direction of *stark* reinforce this). Out of this collective gesture for the horn section emerges the “*corno obbligato*,” a solo horn that

plays a prominent role throughout the movement. Mitchell goes so far as to suggest “if one were looking for the horn concerto that Mahler never wrote, then it is to be found here.”¹⁴⁵ The implications of the concerto genre—often considered to depict an individual’s relationship to society—come to bear on the interpretation of the role of the solo. Narratively speaking, the solo horn takes on the role of the protagonist in the unfolding drama, which also implies agency. One should note, however, that while the *corno obbligato* is primarily associated with S1, it appears in all four types of discourse throughout the movement.

The topical context also communicates a considerable amount of dramatic information. Those familiar with Mahler’s prior symphonies will not fail to recognize this movement as another in a series of *Ländler*. Discussing some features of this musical genre, Micznik notes:

Dictionary examples and a study of various nineteenth-century pieces called *Ländler* (for example by Beethoven or Schubert) show a great diversity in the actual melodic details, suggesting a lack of strict codification at that level. Thus, aside from very general characteristics such as triple meter with accents on every beat, moderate tempo, diatonic materials, unsophisticated I, V, I harmonic structure in major keys, and symmetrical eight- or sixteen-measure phrases usually repeated, Mahler had to develop his own version of a *Ländler*.¹⁴⁶

S1 demonstrates all of these qualities in its uncomplicated D-major discourse. As an Austrian folk dance in low style, the *Ländler* carries associations with another related musical topic: the *pastoral*. As described by Hatten, the *pastoral* topic refers to all things “peaceful, simple, happy, picturesque, and unsullied.”¹⁴⁷ In other words, Part II begins with a discourse of stability, uncomplicated in contrast to the fractured music of Part I. S1, therefore, plays the role of the order-imposing hierarchy in the romantic archetype, embodied in the heroic character of the solo horn.

¹⁴⁵ Mitchell, “Eternity of Nothingness?” 36.

¹⁴⁶ Vera Micznik, “Mahler and ‘The Power of Genre,’” *The Journal of Musicology* 12, No. 2 (Spring 1994): 130.

¹⁴⁷ Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 82.

S2, on the other hand, represents the opposite side of this coin. It begins with eighth-note figures, immediately destabilizing the discourse as gestures I generally refer to with the term *disruption*. In measures 43-47, Mahler presents a new version of the *mocking laughter* gesture from Part I (abbreviated “*m-l*”), which along with the *disruption* figures, takes on the role of antagonist in the unfolding discourse.

Example 2.12: Symphony No. 5/III, mm. 43-47

Three A-clarinets blare out this motive in staggered entrances, coming together in an augmented triad. The repeated, staccato F-sharps recall the basic features of the *mocking laughter* examples from the first and second movements, but now, instead of sounding together, the individual voices overlap. One can also identify subtle gestural references to the *wailing* and *fate* motives. The effect of this disruption occurs immediately with the Scherzo melody now appearing in B minor. Mahler retains the topic of *Ländler* throughout S2, but the intrusion of *disruption* and *mocking laughter* corrupts it and threatens to completely derail the pastoral simplicity of the movement’s opening.

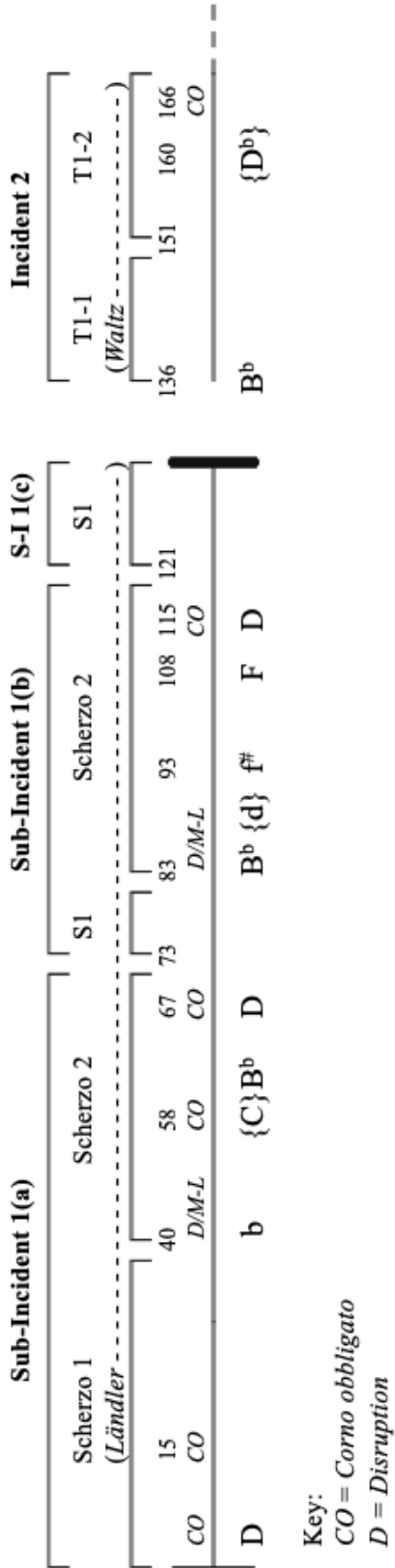
Similar to S1 and S2, Trio 1 and Trio 2 form another pair of opposites. Since neither section corresponds to the primary conflict between the protagonist and antagonist elements, the Trios initially serve as reflective departures from the unfolding drama of the rotations. As such, the most significant aspect of the Trio sections is their musical topic. Both exhibit characteristics of a *waltz*, but differ considerably in their emotional content. Trio 1, with its relative simplicity, slower tempo, and delicate orchestration, suggests what La Grange describes as “an idealized Viennese waltz.”¹⁴⁸ This distinction of “idealized” suggests nostalgia. Trio 2, on the other hand, unfolds over a much lengthier and complex series of sections. The *waltz* topic does not explicitly appear until measure 308 (labeled “Trio 2-1” – with the context of “Trio 2 – Proper”), but the general character of Trio 2 evokes a sense of melancholy. One might characterize the relationship between Trio 1 and Trio 2 as one of innocence versus experience.

The View from the Middle: Configuration of the Incidents

Incident 1 (mm. 1-135): The first incident of Part II accomplishes several narrative tasks quite efficiently (Figure 2.12). S1 consists of three periods in D major (mm. 1-15, 15-26, and 26-39), all of which end with a PAC. After the torturous discourses of Part I, the regularity of phrases and cadences is unusual. Of course, Mahler maintains interest through a continuous development of the basic ideas from period to period, but the straightforward quality to this music serves a deeper dramatic purpose. It establishes the Scherzo as taking place within an unfolding present tense of unmarked temporality. The first sub-rotation also serves to firmly

¹⁴⁸ Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Vienna: The Years of Challenge (1897-1904)*, vol. 2 of *Gustav Mahler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 815.

Figure 2.12: Symphony No. 5/III, First Rotation (R1) and Trio 1



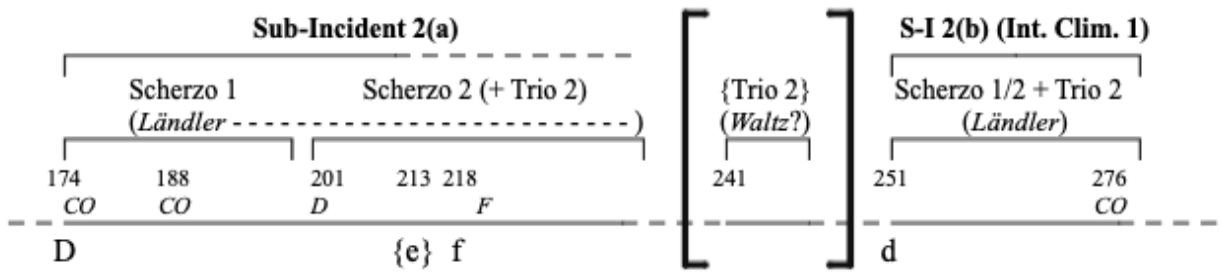
establish the narrative setting: a *pastoral* romance involving the opposition of protagonist and antagonist musical entities in a conflict of stability versus instability. As mentioned, S2 introduces threats to the pervading stability through use of the *disruption* figures and *mocking laughter* motive, which transforms the D-major Scherzo theme into a B-minor version (mm. 47-56). The protagonist *corno obbligato*, however, demonstrates its agential power by initiating the move back to stability, first in C major (mm. 57-60) and then in D major (mm. 66-72). The sudden shift back to D major occurs as an “arrival 6/4,” which Hatten defines as an “[e]xpressively focal cadential six-four serving as resolution of thematic or tonal instabilities, often with a Picardy-third effect.” Hatten also notes that, in the music of Liszt, this technique takes on the expressive quality of a “salvation six-four.”¹⁴⁹ That particular moniker certainly applies in this case. In measure 67, one can discern the A in the bass and a D minor-to-major Picardy-third effect in the first and second violins. A second sub-rotation (Sub-Incident 1[b]) reinforces this mini-narrative in almost precisely the same way, beginning in measure 73. Although S1 is reduced to a single D-major period, S2 enacts the same departure and return but through new tonal regions. It appears this sequence will repeat a third time with the start of Sub-Incident 1(c) in measure 121, but the continuous *Ländler* discourse suddenly breaks off when an implied D-major PAC unexpectedly moves to B-flat major.

Incident 2 (mm. 136-73): While perhaps not as extreme as the discontinuities of Part I, this shift in the level of discourse between the Scherzo material and Trio 1 creates a similar temporal disjunction. If the *Ländler* represented an unfolding present, Trio 1—with its slower tempo, sudden key change, and *Waltz* topic—suggests a retreat into memory. Mahler reinforces this by creating a unique quality of nostalgia through use of *glissandi* and the instruction that the

¹⁴⁹ Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*, 288, 15.

melody's rhythm "be played somewhat fleetingly and carelessly, in whatever instrument it appears."¹⁵⁰ The relatively short Trio contains two subsections, the first simple and straightforward in B-flat major, the second slightly more complex, developing the melodic idea into its definitive form (violins, mm. 151-55) and briefly tonicizing D-flat major (mm. 160-65). The *corno obbligato* returns in measures 166-69, but acts more as a spectator than as a participant in this flashback.

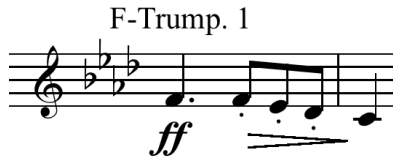
Figure 2.13: Symphony No. 5/III, Second Rotation (R2)



Incident 3 (mm. 174-281): The beginning of R2 functions as a sudden jolt out of memory and back into the present tense. Similarly to how it began, Trio 1 ends with an evaded cadence. This time, the implied B-flat major gives way to D major with a staggered return to the Scherzo's main theme (marked *keck!*—"brazen") in the trumpets, trombones, and horns. The sub-rotational elements appear, once again, to reenact the basic romantic narrative between S1 and S2. Mahler elongates the *disruption* figures beginning in measure 201, leading to the introduction of a motive associated with Trio 2.

¹⁵⁰ Mahler, *Symphonies Nos. 5 and 5 in Full Score*, 124.

Example 2.13: Symphony No. 5/III, mm. 222-23



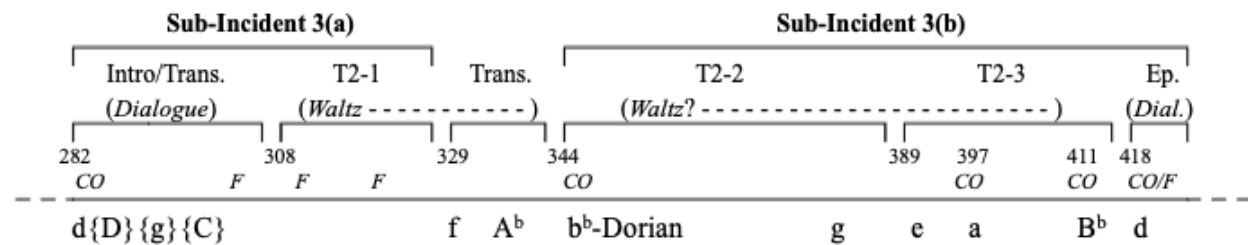
Although divorced from the *wailing* gesture, this constitutes a variant of the *fate* motive from Part I, although it also possesses a quality of the *mocking laughter* gesture with its repeated, staccato eighth-notes. Celestini certainly considers it to be directly related to the *fate* motive from the second movement, which he connects, more broadly, to a large number of falling gestures throughout the Fifth.¹⁵¹ With the way prepared by the transitional combination of the *disruption* figures and *fate* motive, it would seem that the tempo change (*Langsamer*) and new material beginning at measure 241 signifies the official start of the second Trio. And yet, the new discourse quickly subsides into the first of the five Integrative Climaxes. This brief and premature iteration of Trio 2 reveals that the disjunctions of Part I have carried over into Part II. The interpenetration of temporal-expressive zones reveals, once again, a higher-level subjectivity that transcends even the protagonist avatar of the *corno obbligato*.

While one could consider what I call “Integrative Climax 1” as a section of a much larger Trio 2, the commonalities it shares with other integrative stretches of music set it apart. Out of the four types of musical discourse found in the Scherzo (S1, S2, Trio 1, and Trio 2), each of the integrative sections combines three of them simultaneously (save for the coda, which combines all four). In this case, beginning in measure 251, Mahler juxtaposes the *disruption* figure from S2, a three-note motivic segment from S1’s main theme, and the only recently heard Trio 2

¹⁵¹ Celestini, “*Fünfte Symphonie*,” 44.

theme. It begins with an abrupt shift to D minor, and the tempo gradually picks up speed (*Drängend* – “pressing”) as sinking gestures in the strings contribute to the sense of destabilization. The climactic point of this section occurs at measure 270 with one of Mahler’s most unusual sonic inventions. The strings and woodwinds hold out a D chord with an open fifth, and then each of the horns enter on F to complete the minor triad, one at a time, until the *corno obbligato* emerges alone from out of this mass of sound. Mitchell described this moment as a canon on a single note out of which the protagonist emerges from the collective of voices.¹⁵²

Figure 2.14: Symphony No. 5/III, Trio 2



Incident 3 (mm. 282-428): The lengthy section that falls under the heading of Trio 2 divides into two sub-incidents. The first transitions away from the Integrative Climax and into T2-1 (Trio 2 Proper), but the second sub-incident develops this material and begins to transition back out of the domain of Trio 2. In general, Trio 2 presents the most introspective music of the movement, which perhaps explains its nebulous, shifting, and formally complex properties. The introductory section consists of a dialogue between the *corno obbligato* and orchestra, almost in the form of questions and answers. While primarily in D minor, this passage tonicizes several other tonal regions and includes numerous fermatas, tempo changes, and highly detailed

¹⁵² Mitchell, “Eternity of Nothingness?” 47.

expressive directions. The extraordinary freedom of this passage reveals a subjectivity that, like Trio 1, suggests a wholly separate temporal space than that of the rotations, perhaps one also tied to memory or, at least, a quiet moment of reflection. Interestingly, measures 282-85 reference Trio 1 in the orchestral response to the solo horn's emergence out of the "canon on a note," and it occurs again in measures 291-92. T2-1 presents Trio 2 in its definitive form. Until this point, it remained topically ambiguous. Beginning in measure 308, however, an unmistakable *waltz* topic emerges, one reminiscent of Trio 1. Still in D minor, this second *waltz* implies that the nostalgic innocence of Trio 1 has soured into melancholic experience in Trio 2, and Mahler treats this passage with considerable delicacy, initially scoring it for a string quartet playing pizzicato.

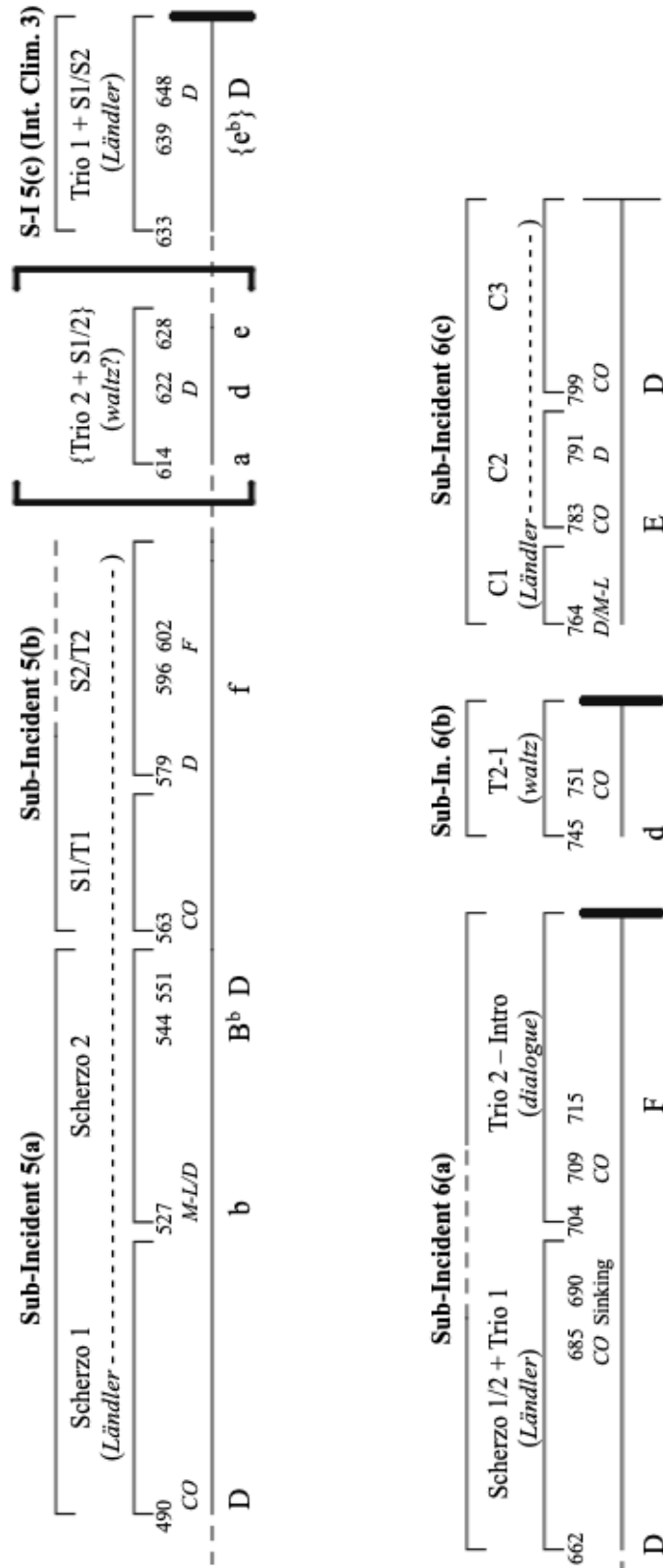
The transition that follows retains the *waltz* topic, references Trio 1 in the oboe solo, and begins to integrate some of the rustic *Ländler* as the *waltz* rhythm gradually dies away (see the A-flat major passage, mm. 337-43). T2-2 begins with another dialogue section between the *corno obbligato* and violins in B-flat dorian. The raised sixth degree creates an emotional ambiguity, but this section continues to grow darker as the tonicization of that raised sixth leads to G minor. T2-3 initially begins quite similarly to the parenthetical introduction to Trio 2, and it includes references to the main Scherzo theme (trombone, mm. 406-11) and Trio 1 (mm. 411-6). Trio 2 ends as it began, with a brief version of the horn/orchestra dialogue, coming to a complete halt with a fermata in measure 428.

Incident 4 (mm. 429-89): The development stands on its own as the second Integrative Climax of the movement and does not require substantial comment. While it does include all four types of discourse, it does not substantially integrate them together. D1 begins with what initially sounds like a return to Trio 2 proper with its *waltz* topic and F-minor tonality. Mahler layers the Trio 1 melody on top of this accompaniment as the tempo gradually accelerates

(*allmählich bewegter, ins Tempo I. übergehend*—“gradually more agitated, progressing to Tempo I”). It is important to note that Trio 2, while topically and tonally implied, does not become completely reconciled with Trio 1, which only occurs near the end of the movement. In D2, Trio 1 combines with S2’s *disruption*. The final section, D3, combines the rhythm of *mocking laughter* with the minor-mode version of the Scherzo theme. At measure 476, Trio 1’s melody joins the building cacophony (including the rare use of the *Holzklapper* [slapstick] in the percussion). Moving toward an expected B-flat minor cadence, Mahler subverts that expectation with a notated *Luftpause* and a rhetorical shift back to the start of the third D-major rotation.

Incident 5 (mm. 490-661): This shift provides a genuine sense of recapitulation, returning to a sub-rotation of S1 and S2 with relatively few changes, including the arrival 6/4 in D major (this time without the active participation of the *corno obbligato*, m. 551). The ability to always return to D-major stability reinforces the romantic archetype with its episodic approach to incidents and sub-incidents and the implied assurance of victory for the protagonist. Still, Mahler’s approach remains far from simplistic, and while the parallel patterning of the basic sub-rotations remains intact, the higher-level integration of the Trios overlays a processive *telos* onto the music, particularly evident from here to the end of the movement (Figure 2.15). Mahler extends the D-major conclusion of S2 and elides it with the start of the second sub-rotation (m. 563). Here, Trio 1 takes on the role of S1 through a topical transformation from *waltz* to *Ländler*. No longer merely a memory, Trio 1 now conforms to the unfolding present-tense in D major. Likewise, Trio 2 takes on the character of S2, which is less surprising given its gradual emergence out of S2 in the second rotation. Reframing the S1/S2 narrative in terms of Trio 1 and Trio 2 clearly indicates that the central conflict between stability and instability applies to the tension between innocence and experience. The parenthetical insertion of Trio 2, followed by an

Figure 2.15: Symphony No. 5/III, Third and Fourth Rotations (R3/R4) and Coda



Integrative Climax, reworks the features of R2. Trio 2 now includes accompanimental motives from S1 and S2 (specifically the first three notes of the Scherzo theme and the *disruption* figure). The third Integrative Climax begins with the *Ländler* version of Trio 1, and Mahler layers motives of S1 and S2 as the tempo accelerates, once again, to a high point that is denied (see the *mini-collapse* in m. 661).

Incident 6 (mm. 662-819): The final rotation presents a significant departure as it consists entirely of Integrative Climaxes separated by a return to Trio 2 – Proper (Figure 2.15). The fourth Integrative Climax (sub-incident 6[a]) begins after the collapse of the third, including another *Luftpause*, building from the ground up. Most importantly, the “canon on a note” recurs but without the canon. The horn sections sound together, apart from the *corno obbligato*, which remains separate. Notably, this occurs in D major instead of its original minor version, and Mahler blurs the lines between the winding-down of this outburst and the introductory dialogue to Trio 2. The return of Trio 2—in more or less its original form (complete with *waltz* topic) in D minor—constitutes the last threat to stability. Trio 2 has yet to reconcile with Trio 1, and it remains the only discourse not completely integrated. That task falls to the fifth Integrative Climax, which serves as the movement’s coda. The reconciliation of the four types of discourse occurs in three stages. C1 begins with the rhythm (for unpitched bass drum) that characterizes both the Scherzo theme as well as the *mocking laughter* gesture. In a sense, by foregrounding this rhythmic connection, the *mocking laughter* is redeemed and no longer functions as a subversive, destabilizing agent. The prototypical *mocking laughter* motive does break out in measure 772, but it quickly ceases after a trumpet fanfare leads to a tonal shift from D minor to E major at the beginning of C2. This section combines S1 and S2 elements harmoniously, including the *disruption* figure (no longer functioning as a subversive element). A forceful

restatement of the Scherzo theme for the *corno obbligato*, horns, and trombones leads directly to C3: the total reconciliation and superimposition of all four discourses (Trio 1 in the woodwinds and violins, Trio 2 in the descending horns and trumpets, S2 in the redeemed *disruption* figure and *mocking laughter* motive, and S1 as the D-major *Ländler* topic (plus the implicit rhythmic connection to *mocking laughter*). The movement ends with a final statement of the Scherzo theme for all the horns, confirming the romantic archetype by heralding the order-imposing hierarchy, in the form of its protagonist, as victorious over the destabilizing transgressive elements by reconciling them unto itself.

Part II: Conclusions

Although Part II works as a self-contained narrative, its narrative power comes from the ways it subverts the narrative characteristics of Part I. In many ways, the relationship of rotations and Trios mirrors the *Trauermarsch*, with the Trio sections serving as temporal departures from the main sections. Here, one finds an excellent example of Belknap's notion of parallel plotting at the highest level, but in the case of the Scherzo, Mahler reverses the temporal relationships. The formal complexities of the movement arise directly from the interactions between the temporal zones. S1 and S2, representing the present, suggest an episodic, heroic plot of small challenges and triumphs that, while continually evolving in small ways, remain largely the same. The path forward out of this endless cycle, then, must come in the form of a resolution of the still unresolved conflict of Part I between past and present. Trios 1 and 2 represent two conflicting views of the past, both positive and negative. As such, Mahler must find a way to resolve them with the present and with each other in order to achieve the desired resolution. The key insight

here, particularly in terms of its worldview implications, is that Mahler does not attempt to achieve this through *Durchbruch* (which failed in Part I) but, instead, through reconciliation.

PART III: THE COMIC FUTURE

Overview: The Comic Archetype

The completion of the Fifth Symphony's narrative in Part III turns toward the narrative form of comedy. As previously discussed, Frye contends that "[t]he four *mythoi* that we are dealing with, comedy, romance, tragedy, and irony, may now be seen as four aspects of a central unifying myth," and that, ultimately, the comic archetype can subsume the others into itself.¹⁵³ Because of this, Part III retroactively applies its comic narrative to the preceding movements and constitutes the least narratively autonomous of the three Parts. Comic transvaluation consists of the defeat of a negatively-valued order-imposing hierarchy by a positively-valued transgressive force.¹⁵⁴ While this basic definition may not immediately illuminate how Part III constitutes a comic narrative, Frye's insights into the characteristics of the narrative archetype, as well as a detailed analysis of the music, will make the connection clearer. First and foremost, comic narratives typically involve a love story. Frye explains, "[w]hat normally happens is that a young man wants a young woman, that his desire is resisted by some opposition."¹⁵⁵ This resistance usually comes in the form of what Frye refers to as "blocking characters," and one may translate this, in purely musical terms, to formal/tonal disruptions that subvert the expected outcome. It follows that "[t]he obstacles to the hero's desire, then, form the action of the comedy, and the

¹⁵³ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 192.

¹⁵⁴ Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 66.

¹⁵⁵ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 163.

overcoming of them the comic resolution.”¹⁵⁶ In the case of the two movements that make up Part III, the *Adagietto* establishes the romantic plot while the Rondo-Finale unfolds the comic narrative itself.

According to Frye, comic narratives tend to develop along two lines: “one is to throw the main emphasis on the blocking characters; the other is to throw it forward on the scenes of discovery and reconciliation.”¹⁵⁷ In the Rondo-Finale, Mahler partakes in both approaches. Baxendale details the ways Mahler subverts cadential expectations as a means of delaying the climax of the movement (and the entire work) to create maximum impact. She argues, “[e]xtending the implications of interrupted cadences over long spans of music which appear to be developed out of localized harmonic deception proves to be an important structuring factor in the finales of all the middle symphonies.”¹⁵⁸ In precisely this manner, Mahler introduces “blocking characters” that delay, and therefore enhance, the ultimate resolution of the plot. On the other hand, as observed in Part II, the denouement also depends on the reconciliation of various musical elements. This time, however, Mahler does not present these elements as initially incompatible. Rather, these musical entities belong together, and the unfolding drama results from the musical process by which these convergences occur. This corresponds, by analogy, to Frye’s suggestion that festive rituals, frequently weddings, form a typical feature of the comic archetype.¹⁵⁹ Ultimately, “[c]omedy usually moves toward a happy ending, and the normal response of the audience to a happy ending is ‘this should be.’”¹⁶⁰ To emphasize this notion of “should” in another way, I put forward the argument that Part III constitutes a

¹⁵⁶ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 164.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁵⁸ Baxendale, “The Finale of Mahler’s Fifth Symphony,” 267.

¹⁵⁹ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 163.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 167.

projection of future happiness: “this *should* be” but, perhaps, is not quite yet. Having reconciled the present with the past, Mahler now looks toward the future. This does not suggest that Part III exists in an entirely imaginary world not connected to the unfolding narrative. Rather, it expresses a forward-looking optimism to a desired future just over the horizon.

IV. Adagietto. Sehr langsam.

The View from Above: Formal Design

The *Adagietto* presents a more straightforward formal design due to its relative brevity and simplicity. Scored only for strings and harp, many scholars describe it as a “song without words.”¹⁶¹ More specifically, as Hefling argues, it functions as a love song, and as such, represents the introduction of a new emotional realm into the Fifth.¹⁶² There exist several reasons to adopt this interpretation: (1) the simplicity and immediacy of the style sets it apart from the complexities seen in the previous movements, and in general, the journey into simplicity and away from complexity forms a central aspect of the Fifth’s overall comic narrative; (2) despite a performance history of extremely slow and melancholic renderings of this movement, Gilbert Kaplan, by studying the performance durations of Mahler’s performances and of those who knew him, claims that “slow performances of the *Adagietto* distort the character and function of the music”;¹⁶³ (3) Floros notices a similarity between measures 61-71 in the B-section with

¹⁶¹ Some examples include: A. Peter Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire*, vol. 4, *The Second Golden Age of the Viennese Symphony: Brahms, Bruckner, Dvorák, Mahler, and Selected Contemporaries* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 647; Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 154; and La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 2, 818.

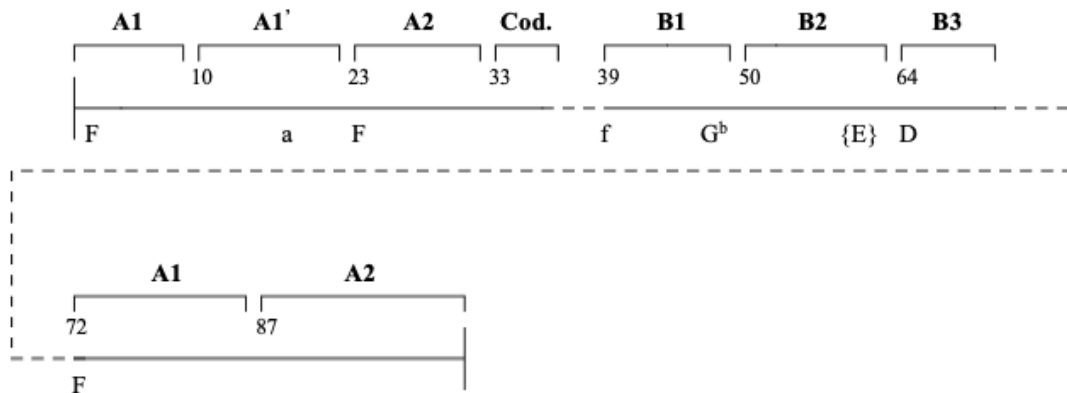
¹⁶² Hefling, “Song and Symphony (II). From *Wunderhorn* to Rückert and the middle-period symphonies,” 117.

¹⁶³ Gilbert Kaplan, “*Adagietto*: From Mahler with Love,” in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham, 379-400 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 382.

Wagner’s “gaze motif” from *Tristan und Isolde*;¹⁶⁴ and (4) although the *Adagietto* possesses similar musical features to Mahler’s setting of “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen”—a song describing a state of resignation from the world—a closer look reveals that most of these connections (in the form of motivic similarities to be discussed below) come from the final measures of the song, which sets the text “Ich leb’ allein in meinem Himmel, / In meinem Lieben, in meinem Lied” (“I live alone in my own heaven, / In my love, in my song.”), establishing the positive connection between them. Biographical details also support this interpretation, but I will save this discussion for later.

The *Adagietto* conforms to a simple ABA scheme, but a close examination allows for interesting details to emerge out of this basic pattern.

Figure 2.16: Symphony No. 5/IV, Formal Diagram



The initial A section consists of a quasi bar form in which two similar (though not identical) stanzas (A1) come before an *Abgesang* (A2), itself followed by a short codetta. Altogether, this first A section contains a miniature narrative in which an initial F-major idea, when repeated,

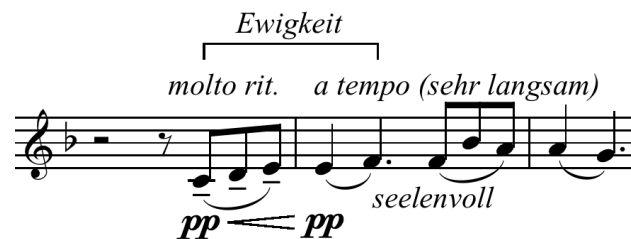
¹⁶⁴ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 155.

collapses into A minor and is subsequently restored to F major. The B section realizes this same narrative at a higher level. It begins in f minor, a key laden with negative connotations throughout the entire symphony (II—secondary theme, III—Trio 2), but it soon dissolves into a series of major keys, mostly notably D major (redeeming the digression), and moving back to F major. The return to the A section serves to confirm F-major stability by eliminating the bar form mini-narrative, providing a single A1 stanza along with an A2 that absorbs the codetta function into itself. Considered alone, the *Adagietto* possesses qualities of a romantic archetype, but in the context of Part III as a whole, it functions as an introduction to the Rondo-Finale and, as such, retains its comic status.

The View from Below: Surface-Level Entities

The most significant surface-level entity in this movement consists of the inclusion of the *Ewigkeit* motive in both the A and B sections. While perhaps not immediately apparent, the opening motivic idea of the *Adagietto* stems directly from the *Ewigkeit* motive's initial appearance (compare with Example 2.3).

Example 14: Symphony No. 5/IV, mm. 2-4



As a gesture, the upward resolution of the leading-tone suggests satisfaction, due to the virtual force of magnetism. Because of this, one may infer that the redemption sought throughout Parts I

and II finds its fulfillment here. One could also, perhaps, recharacterize the motive as something like “*redemption through love*,” a name borrowed from its association with Wagner’s *Ring*, which expresses the salvific aspect of romantic love. In the B section, it returns to its definitive form and occurs several times during B2 and B3 (see measures 51-52). These two subsections serve an important function. Variations of measures 50-71 will reappear several times during the Rondo-Finale. Typically, analysts view these final-movement appearances as flashbacks, but the interpretation of the temporal realm of Part III as forward-looking suggests that the music of measures 50-71 functions as an anticipation of the Finale. Kennedy accurately describes the feeling of this passage as “an unfulfilled yearning of special poignancy.”¹⁶⁵ This need for fulfillment will fall to the Rondo-Finale.

Topically, the *Adagietto* conforms to the notion of a “*singing style*,” hence its characterization as a “song without words.” According to Sarah Day-O’Connell’s discussion of this musical topic, *singing style* refers to instrumental music that “could easily be performed by the human voice.”¹⁶⁶ Barring a few difficult passages, the melodic ideas of this movement largely fall under this criterion. The *Adagietto* fits this category so well that Wilhelm Mengelberg, conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra and a close personal friend of Mahler’s, composed his own lyrics to the melody, written into his score.¹⁶⁷ This leads to an important point concerning the movement’s temporal relationship to the entire symphony. As a subjective outpouring of feeling, the *Adagietto* exists outside the temporal flow of the narrative and does not directly participate in the causal chain of events. Instead, it introduces a new musical character: the embodiment of the narrator’s affections in the form of the *Ewigkeit* motive. Thus,

¹⁶⁵ Kennedy, *Mahler*, 138.

¹⁶⁶ Sarah Day-O’Connell, “The Singing Style,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. by Danuta Mirka, 238-58 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 241.

¹⁶⁷ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 154-55.

the *Adagietto* sets up the dramatic conditions necessary for the resumption of the narrative in the Rondo-Finale.

The View from the Middle: Configuration of the Incidents

Incident 1 (mm. 1-38): As discussed, there exists a miniature narrative at work in this beginning incident, but it includes a few interesting details worth exploring. After the initial stanza in F major, the second stanza modulates to A minor, and the melody’s transformation references a similar passage from “Um Mitternacht,” one of the *Rückert-Lieder* composed in the same summer Mahler began composing the Fifth Symphony.

Example 15: Symphony No. 5/IV, mm. 11-17



Example 16: *Rückert-Lieder*, “Um Mitternacht,” mm. 30-34



Although not an exact quotation, the similarities suggest an emotional connection. The text in question reads: “No vision of light / brought me comfort / at midnight.”¹⁶⁸ These musical moments share an intertextual function in expressing a sense of hopelessness. In the context of

¹⁶⁸ Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death*, 35. Translation by Deryck Cooke.

the *Adagietto*, one might view this as doubt in possibility of love. The PAC in A minor at measure 19 recalls the tonality of the second movement, creating an implied link between the failure of the D-major chorale and the potential failure of the desired *redemption through love*. This despair, however, slowly dissipates as the *Abgesang* timidly returns to F major (through the common tones of A and C). The music grows more confident, building toward an arrival 6/4 in F major at measure 30 with cascading arpeggios and a flourish from the harp. A brief codetta quietly ends the A section.

Incident 2 (mm. 39-71): The incursion of F minor that begins the B section grows out of a motive introduced in the A-minor part of the A section. In measures 20-21, the cellos quietly play the motive that comes back with greater force in measure 39. Even more than A minor, the shift to F minor carries extremely dark implications for the possibility of redemption. But the equally sudden move to G-flat major creates a sudden feeling of relief and transitions to the Rondo-Finale anticipation that begins in measure 50. Interestingly, the *Ewigkeit* motive's initial appearance in Part I occurred during a brief G-flat major passage, which also took the form of sudden relief from the tempestuous Trio 1. Undoubtedly, the *Ewigkeit* motive itself serves as the climax of the B section in measures 56-57, reaching the movement's highest point in terms of pitch. From here, B2 begins to descend from this height, including a brief move to E major on the way to D major and B3. As the symphony's ultimate tonal goal, D major redeems the tonal digressions of A minor and F minor, pointing toward the complete dramatic resolution to come, but D-major never appears in root position in order not to resolve the tension too completely.

Incident 3 (mm. 72-103): The return of the A section begins with another arrival 6/4, which occurs yet again in the final measures of the movement (see m. 95). Mahler retains the slower tempo until measure 78 in order to perpetuate the floating, dream-like quality of B2/3. A2

once again builds toward a climactic point featuring a series of suspensions and resolutions that provide a satisfactory close to the movement. Notably, the *Adagietto* ends with the direction: “*attacca* Rondo-Finale.” With the introduction of a new romantic element and the realization of the *Ewigkeit* motive as *redemption through love*, Mahler proceeds directly into the work’s resolution.

V. Rondo-Finale

The View from Above: Formal Design

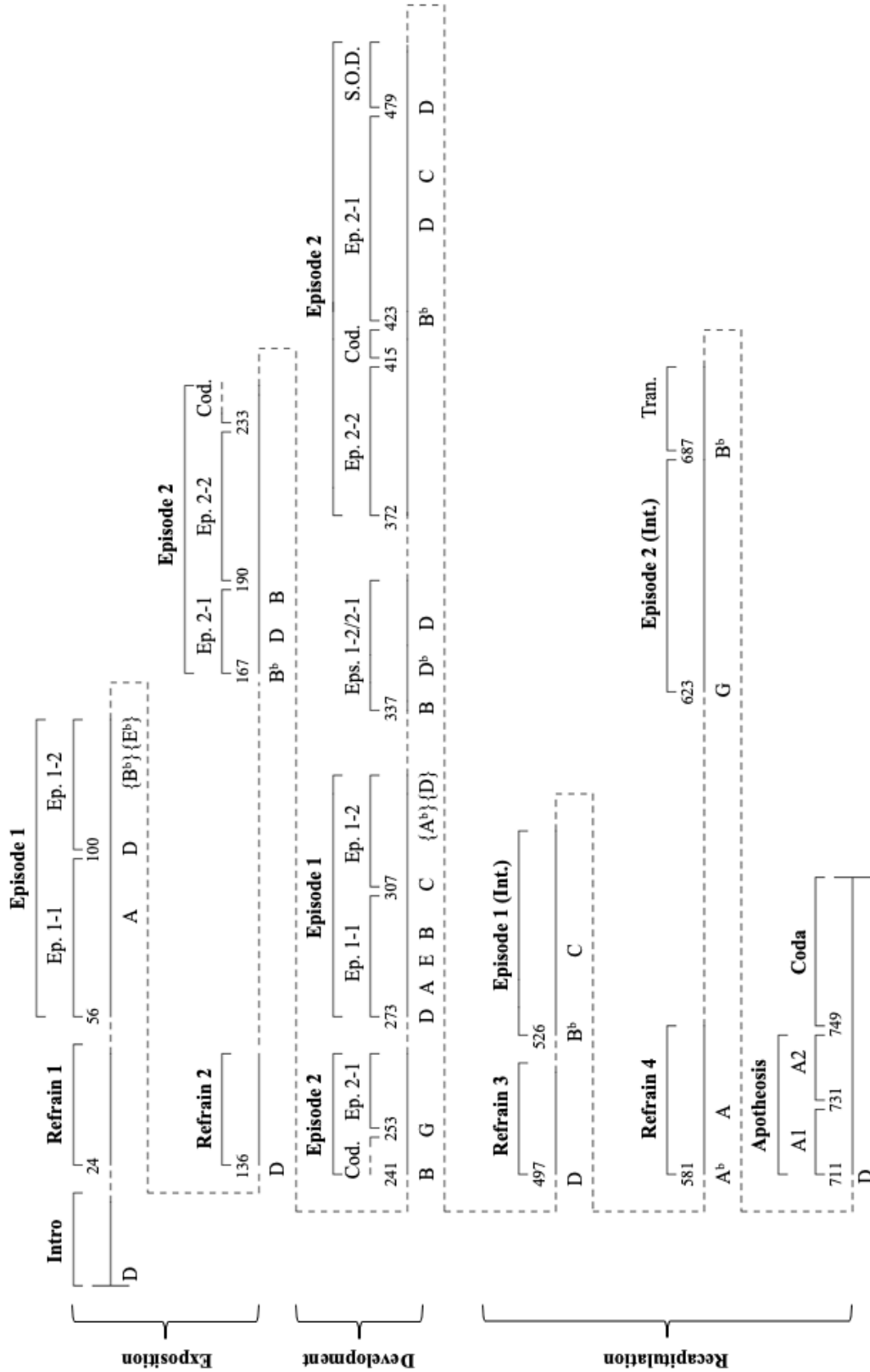
In keeping with the other movements, the Rondo-Finale presents a formal ambiguity, although not on the scale of the Scherzo. Floros acknowledges the Rondo-like elements, but he primarily sees it as a sonata-form movement, given “the existence of numerous development passages, the manner of treatment, and above all the tonal disposition.”¹⁶⁹ And despite Mahler’s overt description of the movement as a “Rondo,” La Grange observes that “some commentators have been tempted to discern in this rondo a disguised sonata,” although the fact that “[t]here are very strong arguments against adopting this hypothesis.”¹⁷⁰ Baxendale argues that “[t]hough sonata symmetries are still to be found, the salient features of such an archetype are obscured by the more immediate and intentional effect of rondo-like sectional oppositions.”¹⁷¹ In my estimation, the difficulties of the Rondo-Finale come down to three key points: (1) Mahler creates a genuine feeling of ritornello at each return of the refrain; (2) he also downplays the

¹⁶⁹ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 157.

¹⁷⁰ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 2, 820.

¹⁷¹ Baxendale, “The Finale of Mahler’s Fifth Symphony,” 274.

Figure 2.17: Symphony No. 5/V, Formal Diagram



significance of the refrains as they constitute a comparatively small amount of the musical material of the movement; and (3) as in the Scherzo, Mahler dramatizes the shift from a lengthy, developmental section—complete with a Beethovenian standing-on-the-dominant—to a tonal and thematic return (Refrain 3), which one cannot help but hear as a recapitulation. Because of this, Figure 2.17 represents an attempt to present these features as clearly as possible with the caveat that no representation will capture all of the movement’s formal complexity.

Figure 2.17 presents the movement as primarily motivically/thematically driven rather than tonally/formally. This does not suggest that tonal and formal articulations present in the Rondo-Finale should be ignored. Even still, my determination of what constitutes a particular “Refrain” or “Episode” mainly concerns its melodic material, and there are a few reasons for this. First, tonal shifts do not always constitute the best means of articulating the form of this movement. In several cases, a sudden shift may indicate the beginning of a new section and then immediately return to a previous or entirely new key (example: Episode 2-1, beginning in m. 167), or a new section will begin without an accompanying change of tonality, making the motivic/thematic material the most substantial articulation for the beginning of a new stretch of music (example: Episode 1-1, beginning in m. 56). Second, Mahler foregrounds the motivic element of the music by introducing three of the six significant musical ideas as distinct entities in the movement’s opening measures. Third, and most importantly, hearing the movement in this way sets it apart from Parts I and II by reducing the impact of the tonal/cadential disruptions. Instead of the large-scale temporal disruptions of the previous movements, the Finale presents an almost completely continuous surge of forward motion. Even the so-called “blocking characters” frequently occur only at the local level (although there are exceptions, especially the unexpected shift to A-flat major that begins Refrain 4). Because of this, the Rondo-Finale represents a vision

of the future where its theme-characters largely control their own destiny, freed from the threat of top-down formal disruption.

Two other observations remain concerning the movement's form. As Figure 2.17 suggests, the majority of the movement consists of the Episodes. Both subdivide into two subsections, which function independently but often appear together. The entirety of the development consists in reworking the episodic material. Mahler bookends this development with Episode 2-1, which begins and ends this large span of music and appears to take on an increasingly important role. The two Episodes reappear more or less as they did in the "exposition" but without the Refrain separating them. Mahler also bridges the gap between the Episodes, beginning in measure 337, with a section that blends elements of Episode 1-2 and 2-1. Even more of this merging of sections occurs in the recapitulation space. Episodes 1-1 and 1-2 come together as a single entity following Refrain 3. Likewise, Episodes 2-1 and 2-2 merge together just before the movement's apotheosis.

The second observation, one frequently pointed out but worth mentioning all the same, is that the apotheosis consists of the return of the D-major *chorale* from the second movement. Mahler does not literally quote from that earlier passage. Instead, he transforms the chorale to fit with the forward-surgingly discourse of the Rondo-Finale. As to whether or not this return constitutes a genuine flashback or if its initial appearance served as an anticipation of this moment is a question I will return to later. For now, it suffices to note that Mahler ends the symphony with an inter-movement connection to prior musical events.

The View from Below: Surface-Level Entities

Because the form of this movement is driven by its thematic material, one must identify the significant ideas of each section in order to understand their interactions in the musical discourse. **Introduction:** The opening measures introduce three of the ideas that will play a significant role throughout the movement. The first of these, beginning on solo horn and completed by a solo bassoon, constitutes the last appearance of material originating in a previously written song from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* in any of Mahler's Symphonies.

Example 2.17: Symphony No. 5/V, mm. 3-6

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: 1. Horn and 1. Bassoon. The Horn part is in the upper staff, and the Bassoon part is in the lower staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Horn part begins with a forte (f) dynamic, followed by a piano (fp) dynamic. The Bassoon part begins with a forte (f) dynamic. The Horn part has a bracket labeled '(Ewigkeit?)' and the Bassoon part has a bracket labeled 'fate'.

A. Peter Brown summarizes the meaning of this quotation:

The opening material of the rondo comes from the [*Des Knaben Wunderhorn*] song “Lob des hohen Verstandes” (In praise of high intellect), which Mahler composed in June 1896. Here, both the character and the text may have some relevance. They concern a song contest between the cuckoo and the nightingale, which was to be judged by the donkey because he has two great big ears. The donkey found the nightingale’s song too difficult and made the cuckoo the winner because of his “firm tempo” and “good choral tune,” a decision emanating from the donkey’s intellect. It is ironical that, with all of the Finale’s contrapuntal artifice, the quotation of this tune in the introduction (mm. 5-6) results in a movement that praises all that is learned in musical composition.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire*, vol. 4, 636.

This last comment by Brown seems particularly relevant in this case. While the song humorously parodies the taste of the critic, its use in the context of the Finale serves as praise for the spirit of creativity, in spite of critical misunderstandings. In Michael Kennedy's estimation, "Mahler serves notice that he is about to give a display of academic prowess, fugue and all."¹⁷³ As such, I will continue to use the title *Lob des hohen Verstandes* to name this idea wherever it emerges. It includes two smaller motivic elements within it: a possible reference to the *Ewigkeit* motive (albeit rhythmically displaced) and a four-note descending motive related to the *fate* motive seen elsewhere.¹⁷⁴ In this context, this descending gesture indicates the comic trajectory of the entire symphony in its transformation from a tragic motive to one associated with the positive outcome of Part III, which one can observe through its prevalent use throughout the Rondo-Finale in a number of its themes. Interestingly, Baxendale shows how the *Lob des hohen Verstandes* theme, at several points, "anticipates an 'arrival,'" which is denied cadentially.¹⁷⁵ This process of frustration (and its eventual resolution) will form an important part of the overall interpretation. One should note as well this theme's association with the horn sonority with which it begins. Since the Scherzo's protagonist took the form of the *corno obbligato*, the horn here may perform a similar role.

The second theme introduced in the Finale's opening measures relates directly to the D-major *chorale*, although its character, in Floros' words, "seems to have been robbed of all its weight and dignity."¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Kennedy, *Mahler*, Master Musicians, ed. Stanley Sadie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 138.

¹⁷⁴ Celestini, "Fünfte Symphonie," 44.

¹⁷⁵ Baxendale, "The Finale of Mahler's Fifth Symphony," 265-66.

¹⁷⁶ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 158.

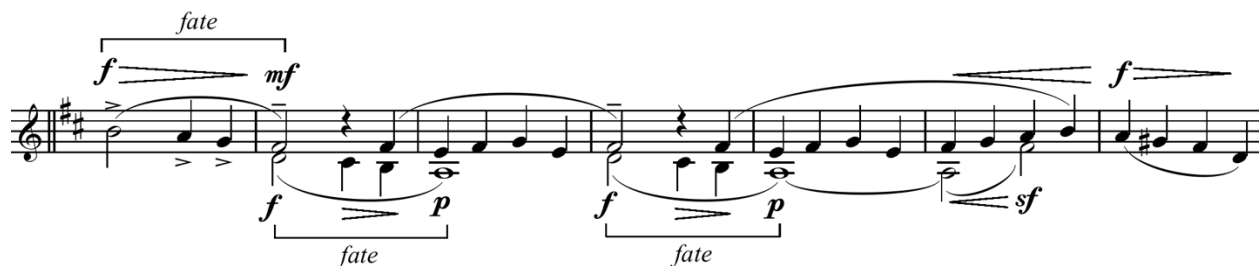
Example 2.18: Symphony No. 5/V, mm. 16-19



Far from mocking the *chorale*'s redemptive music, this sped-up version brings a lightness to the material in keeping with the movement's overall spirit of cheerfulness. Because of its relationship to the *chorale* section labeled A2, I refer to this theme as *chorale(b)* to distinguish it from another thematic connection to the *chorale* that will appear later. The third idea from the introduction, the horn solo in measures 13-15, does not require substantial comment. It serves as a bit of connective tissue (“*link* motive”) between other, more significant ideas and does not appear to contain an explicit expressive identity apart from that role.

Refrain: The first iteration of the Refrain introduces a new thematic idea for the horns, which establishes an important musical topic.

Example 2.19: Symphony No. 5/V, mm. 24-32



The theme begins with the transformed version of the *fate* motive (now seen as a positive outcome) and serves as the basis not only of this theme but of many of the accompanimental figures associated with it. The theme of the Refrain takes on a unique status in that it remains

isolated from the other thematic materials of the movement. It also brings back the *pastoral* topic. The drone in the cellos that begins this section immediately thrusts the listener back into the simple, folk-like style first heard in the Scherzo. The Refrain also includes other hallmarks of the *pastoral*: pedal point, harmonization in parallel thirds, and relatively slow harmonic rhythm. And yet, the texture becomes dense and increasingly polyphonic as it continues. Near the end of the first Refrain, Mahler introduces another significant thematic idea.

Example 2.20: Symphony No. 5/V, mm. 51-55



This fourth theme also relates to the *chorale* apotheosis, specifically the section marked A1, so I label it *chorale(a)*. This initial version does not present the entire idea, which Mahler saves for measures 88-91, and this definitive version also includes the transformed *fate* motive. Baxendale initially refers to this as the “cadential theme,” given its placement at the end of the first Refrain. But she also observes that, at each reappearance, it “appears to be over-enthusiastic” because it “is stated progressively earlier each time.”¹⁷⁷

Episode 1-1: The first section of the first Episode does not introduce any new thematic material. Instead, it utilizes all of the previous themes (save for the Refrain theme) within a new topical environment. The Episode begins with an eighth-note gesture similar to the *disruption* figure of the Scherzo. It does not fulfill that function here. Instead, it begins with a fugal passage that introduces the topic of *learned style*. As Keith Chapin explains in his discussion of this

¹⁷⁷ Baxendale, “The Finale of Mahler’s Fifth Symphony,” 267-68.

musical topic, “[i]n its narrow definition, [the *learned style*] draws on prestigious techniques of imitative and invertible counterpoint, especially fugue and canon.”¹⁷⁸ Drawing from Hatten, Chapin notes that another hallmark of *learned style* comes from its “marked opposition to various more common, low, or galant styles,” which is particularly relevant here considering its emergence immediately after the *pastoral* Refrain.¹⁷⁹ As to the meaning of its use, the *learned style* often functions “as a sign of order and tradition. Other concepts and ideals appear as variations on these themes: God, cosmology, nature, number, law, history, communal collectivity, uncanny alterity, seriousness of purpose, routine and pedantry, the mechanical, and masculinity, among others.”¹⁸⁰ But Chapin emphasizes that a proper interpretation depends on context. In the case of its use here, the *learned style* most readily represents complexity made harmonious. As opposed to the disruptive complexities of Parts I and (to some degree) Part II, the polyphony of Rondo-Finale fulfills the integrative tendencies of the earlier movements by successfully bringing musical elements together. Episode 1-1 in particular combines the thematic materials already introduced into an intricate, but cohesive, musical texture. It also amplifies the creative spirit implied by the *Lob des hohen Verstandes* quotation, which virtually always appears in the context of Episode 1-1 throughout the movement.

Episode 1-2: The second sub-section of Episode 1 synthesizes aspects of the *pastoral* and *learned style* topics with a new thematic idea, and the rising three-note segment that begins its melody will form an important aspect of the integrative sections that occur later. The continuation of the forward-driving eighth-note accompaniment carries over from the previous sub-section, but Mahler also returns to the rustic qualities of the *pastoral* topic, particularly in the

¹⁷⁸ Keith Chapin, “Learned Style and Learned Styles,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. by Danuta Mirka, 301-29 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 301.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Chapin, “Learned Style and Learned Styles,” 323-24.

use of parallel thirds in a new version of *chorale(b)*. In this way, Episode 1-2 represents an intermediary between the two topical worlds of the Rondo-Finale.

Episode 2-1: The first sub-section of the second Episode continues the flurry of eighth-note accompaniment that initially sounds like a return to Episode 1-1. In fact, Floros called this “Fugal Part II” despite the fact that, upon closer inspection, this passage does not contain any evidence of fugal technique. While the eighth-note accompaniment operates continuously in the background, Mahler introduces a new theme, which he does not treat polyphonically. It begins in the horns and appears somewhat similar to the *Lob des hohen Verstandes* theme.

Example 2.21: Symphony No. 5/V, mm. 177-85



Because of this similarity and the predominant horn sonority, this theme may be regarded as connected to the notion of the protagonist. The feature distinguishing it from the *Lob des hohen Verstandes* theme comes with its more overt reference to the *Ewigkeit* motive, specifically the guise in which it appeared in the middle section of the *Adagietto*.

Episode 2-2: It follows, then, that Mahler introduces the theme first introduced in the *Adagietto* in its complete form in the second sub-section of Episode 2 (mm. 190-233). In the context of the *Adagietto*, I argued that this theme from B2/3 served primarily as an anticipation, which finds its proper place here. Taking these two themes of Episode 2 together, one might consider them as opposite sides of the same coin. On the one side, the theme (which I refer to as *romantic hero*) presents the protagonist figure with an explicit reference to *redemption through*

love, and on the other side, the *Adagietto* theme represents the object of that love. With the theme-characters outlined, the discourse of the movement itself unfolds a comic narrative through the interaction of these musical elements.

The View from the Middle: Configuration of the Incidents

Incident 1 (mm. 1-135): The narrative function of this incident is to establish the binaries of low/high musical style and simplicity/complexity and to demonstrate their new-found compatibility. After the brief introduction, Refrain 1 comfortingly returns to a D-major *pastoral* topic, initially seen in the Scherzo. All of the usual associations—stability, simplicity, harmony with nature and the world—apply here, confirming that the resolution of narrative tensions in Part II continues in Part III. As the Refrain continues, particularly starting in measure 39, its texture becomes increasingly dense and polyphonic but not destabilizing. In measures 51-55, the introduction of *chorale(a)*, in an early form, brings about the cadence that begins Episode 1. While the tonality remains in D major, Mahler shifts topic to the *learned style*, complete with a fugato section. An eighth-note figure forms the subject of what is essentially a fugue exposition, which perhaps serves as a redeemed version of the *disruption* figure from the Scherzo. *Chorale(b)* forms the counter-subject as Episode 1-1 grows into a four-voice fugal texture. By measure 79, the final entrance of the subject occurs alongside a shift to A major. At this point, Mahler breaks off the fugue with the *link* motive, leading to the second half of Episode 1-1 (mm. 88-99). It begins with another statement of *chorale(a)*, which functions as one of the only thematic ideas (apart from smaller motives) that links the almost entirely independent Refrain sections with the Episodes. Another iteration of the *link* motive leads to the simultaneous juxtaposition of *chorale(b)* with the *Lob des hohen Verstandes* theme, leading to a potential A-

major cadence. Baxendale sees this moment as a significant part of the movement's "blocking" tendencies:

[T]he first return of [*Lob des hohen Verstandes*] in its original thematic form at bar 95 leads us to expect a climax of the fugal accumulation, since its emphasis on A and its dominant implies stabilization of this key (the 'regular' dominant), and in recalling the opening bars it suggests that the first phrase of the argument is over, providing a framework for bars 1-99. However, this framework is left 'open' by the harmonic interruption at bar 100, and the subsequent avoidance of resolution in A major. Denying expectations in this way initiates a force which impels the music forward, with a strong sense of anticipating eventual resolution.¹⁸¹

Far from a destabilizing disruption—as in similar instances in Parts I and II—this delayed resolution propels into Episode 1-2. This sub-section will prove the most flexible in its ability to change over the course of the movement, but it always tends to combine elements of both the *pastoral* and *learned style* topics. While continuing the previous sub-section's eighth-note rhythmic drive and polyphonic texture, Episode 1-2 also returns to the rustic quality of the Refrain with its simple three-note ascending motive, the inclusion of the Refrain's descending four-note *fate* motive, and the subtle use of *chorale(a)* in major-third harmonization and in rhythmic augmentation (see: woodwinds, mm. 107-15). Episode 1-2 ends with two minor disruptions from "blocking characters" in the form of the abrupt tonicizations of B-flat major (mm. 119-22) and E-flat major (mm. 123-25), but this is quickly resolved as Incident 1 comes to a close.

Incident 2 (mm. 136-240): If the first incident played out a small-scale narrative of synthesis between two worlds, the second incident begins (though does not yet complete) a process of synthesis between two characters: the protagonist and his love. It begins first, however, with the return of the Refrain in even more grand and rich form. It retains its *pastoral* style, particularly through the continued use of drones, but the texture, once again, continues to

¹⁸¹ Baxendale, "The Finale of Mahler's Fifth Symphony," 265.

grow in polyphonic complexity over time. Mahler introduces references to the *Ewigkeit* motive in the strings (violins in mm. 153-54 and 158-59) and moves to end the section with *chorale(a)*, now heard slightly early, as Baxendale points out. Episode 2-1 begins with an unexpected move to B-flat major in measure 161, undercutting the expected D-major cadence. Baxendale views this derailment within the larger role that flat VI plays throughout the symphony, particularly near the end of individual movements: “[t]he frequency of this event . . . appears to signify the discouragement of any feeling of unrealistic security at the end of a movement . . . it highlights conflict as something which may be temporarily brushed aside and dismissed, but which is continually present beneath the surface.”¹⁸² In this context, Mahler introduces the *romantic hero* theme, itself a synthesis of the *Lob des hohen Verstandes* and *Adagietto* themes. After a quick return to D major, Episode 2-2 introduces the *Adagietto* theme itself in B major, the fulfillment of the fourth movement’s future projection. As in the previous movement, Mahler orchestrates this theme primarily for strings, giving it a lyrical distinction (*singing style*) from the previous musical discourse and separating it as a distinct theme-character. Episode 2 ends with a brief codetta in B major that transitions into the development.

Incident 3 (mm. 241-496): This section constitutes the largest expanse of music in the Finale by combining the two Episodes into a singular progression of musical ideas. Here, the *romantic hero* theme takes on a special role by punctuating the major divisions of the development. The codetta from Episode 2 elides with the beginning of the development, continuing the *romantic hero* theme in G major starting at measure 253. The return of Episode 1 includes some variations from its original appearance. The first sub-section continues in its polyphonic complexity, but instead of repeating the fugal exposition, Mahler freely combines the

¹⁸² Baxendale, “The Finale of Mahler’s Fifth Symphony,” 269.

Lob des hohen Verstandes, *chorale(b)*, *link*, and *chorale(a)* ideas through a sequence of rising tonalities by fifth (D-A-E-B). Tension builds as the *Lob des hohen Verstandes* theme appears above a B pedal, but once again, a confirming cadence does not occur. Instead, Episode 1-2 begins in C major (m. 307) with a highly varied version of this material, but it retains its combination of *pastoral* and *learned* topics. Once again, sudden tonicizations of other keys (A-flat and D this time) disrupt C major, which does not reassert itself before the next section begins.

The B-major section that follows emerges directly out of Episode 1-2 by developing its rising three-note motive further in a new variation that, after another tonal shift in D-flat major, begins to combine with the *romantic hero* theme. This passage (mm. 337-72) functions as a transition between the two Episodes, combining the ending of Episode 1 with the beginning of Episode 2. Although it appears Mahler's agenda does not concern a complete integration of the two worlds of the Episodes, he does demonstrate their compatibility through this linkage. In measure 373, the *Adagietto* theme returns in its entirety in D major. Mahler begins to align it with the prevailing discourse of the Rondo-Finale in the orchestration, which now features wind sonorities in addition to strings, and with the solo horn functioning as counterpoint beginning in measure 389. Because of its associations throughout Parts II and III, one cannot help but hear this as the projected goal of Part III: the union of the protagonist with the *Adagietto* theme. The codetta returns in a confirmation of D major, but B-flat major emerges again with another return to Episode 2-1. As in its first appearance, it quickly moves back to D major (m. 441), and this begins the build-up toward the recapitulation. During the lengthy standing-on-the-dominant, Mahler juxtaposes the *romantic hero* theme with *chorale(a)*, followed shortly by the *Lob des*

hohen Verstandes theme, which finally achieves the desired cadence in D major with the return of the Refrain.

Incident 4 (mm. 497-580): Refrain 3 forms the first of what most commentators consider the two climaxes of the movement. As previously discussed, this moment obviously invokes the feeling of a recapitulation, but two other factors contribute to its impact. First, as mentioned, this brings about the long-awaited cadence denied the *Lob des hohen Verstandes* theme, and its symbolic function as expressing the spirit of creativity leads to the second factor. Mitchell points out that the rhythmic variant of the Refrain material carries a profound, work-spanning meaning:

What is so riveting here is Mahler's re-introduction of the *triple*t as a prime feature of his melodic invention at this point. We have not in fact heard triplets—the *triple*t phenomenon—on this torrential scale since Part I, where this rhythmic unit carried an ever-increasing load of imagery, becoming one of the immediately recognizable signifiers of aspiration. Its resurrection at this critical junction in the finale, and the role it plays in the creation of an almost incandescent web of polyphony, means that we have here a mini-celebration of all the aspiring music that heretofore has met with defeat. . . . A good case could be made for identifying it as the real climax of the finale and, no less, the moment when the symphony's initiating conflict is at last resolved.¹⁸³

When he speaks of the “signifiers of aspiration,” Mitchell refers to the triplet's (most often quarter-note triplet's) association with the original emergence of the *Ewigkeit* motive (see Example 2.3). Of course, one might also suggest that this moment redeems the negative contexts of triplet rhythm from Part I as well, such as its use in the opening trumpet solo of the *Trauermarsch*. Out of this dense, joyous outpouring, Mahler presents *chorale(a)* in augmentation (trumpets, mm. 510-16), signaling the soon-to-be-realized second climax.

Episode 1's reprise condenses its two sub-sections into one. It begins with another sudden shift to B-flat, this time following a *Luftpause*. As in the development, Mahler transforms sub-section 1-2 into a transitional section, whose motivic ideas combine with others to create a

¹⁸³ Mitchell, “Eternity of Nothingness?” 53.

hybrid section. Beginning in measure 538, a move to C major coincides with a falling version of the three-note motive from Episode 1-2, the eighth-note figures, and the themes associated with Episode 1-1 layered into the texture. Over a G pedal, *Lob des hohen Verstandes* appears in stretto between wind instruments, building toward an expected climactic point that, once again, goes unfulfilled. Of course, if the climax did occur, it would be in the wrong key, but this does not diminish the anti-climactic effect of Refrain 4's appearance in A-flat major.

Incident 5 (mm. 581-791): Despite the numerous examples of undercutting throughout the Rondo-Finale (what we called "blocking characters" by analogy with Frye's comments on comic narratives), the disruption of Refrain 4 presents the only genuine threat to the discourse. The Refrain loses its vitality and richness through a dramatic reduction in orchestral strength. Despite this further delay of the expected resolution, the comic narrative implies an ultimately positive outcome. A sudden modulation to A major (m. 592) immediately brightens the mood, as the music appears to rebuild. A playful tune emerges within the Refrain (*Grazioso*, m. 606ff.), which continues this process. Finally, Mahler completes the implied goal of the movement, from a thematic perspective, in measure 623, combining the two-subsections of Episode 2 together. If the integration of high/low and simple/complex seen in the recapitulation of Refrain 3 and Episode 1 constituted a *fait accompli* (due to the resolution of Part II), this final act of integration represents the completion of Part III's distinct narrative trajectory: the union of the protagonist with his love. Beginning in G major, the *romantic hero* theme returns on the horn, which immediately gives way to the *Adagietto* theme in the strings, and their juxtaposition further highlights their shared motivic identity in the *Ewigkeit* motive. The *Adagietto* theme continues on its own for some time, but the horns gradually become more prominent, culminating in a call and response between horns and orchestra (mm. 659-73).

With this last narrative plot-point resolved, Mahler moves toward the conclusion. A transition begins in B-flat (once again) and builds toward the apotheosis, which unfolds in two sections. D major returns as A1 begins with *chorale(a)* in its definitive form. In measures 719-21, a majestic horn and trumpet rendition of the *Ewigkeit* motive occurs, representing the union of the two characters. It is only at this juncture that the D-major chorale from the second movement can appear. Kaplan notes how several musical processes converge at this moment. In addition to his argument concerning the location of the chorale's *Höhepunkt* in Part I—which subsequently finds its proper place in the Finale in measure 735—Kaplan also points to the chorale's final and complete redemption of the *wailing* motive (a transformation I referred to in Part I as a *shout for joy*, which recurs here in mm. 730-31) and the way in which Mahler transforms *chorale(b)* into its transcendent and definitive form. This leads him to conclude, “[w]e thus understand the ending of the Fifth Symphony as the confluence of multiple processes—narrative, temporal, thematic and motivic—that thread their way throughout the symphony in a complex web of interrelationships.”¹⁸⁴

The symphony ends in a dizzying coda, which returns *choral(b)* to its more playful form in diminution alongside the transformed *fate* motive as the music crescendos and accelerates (*Allegro molto und bis zum Schluß beschleunigend*). Before the end, however, Mahler throws a final joke into the celebratory finish. In measure 783, he cannot resist the urge to include one last B-flat major disruption, followed by a cascading collapse that restores D major in the final measures. One might interpret this as uncertainty on Mahler's part, and perhaps that interpretation holds true. It seems more likely, however, that in this comic narrative, Mahler

¹⁸⁴ Kaplan, “Temporal Fusion and Climax in the Symphonies of Mahler,” 231; as to the exact location of the proper *Höhepunkt*, Kaplan posits that one could either locate it in m. 735 or 737, both of which, significantly, maintain the energy of the chorale's beginning in m. 731 instead of trailing off as in its initial appearance in Part I.

provides a genuine moment of comedy by defying our expectations and undercutting the seriousness of the proceedings. Significantly, the *Ewigkeit* motive has the last word. Although somewhat buried in the total orchestral texture, the first trumpet intones this motive, followed by a short segment of *chorale(b)*, bringing the Fifth Symphony to a close.

THE FIFTH SYMPHONY AND NARRATIVE IDENTITY

The View from the Inter-Movement Plot

The Fifth Symphony presents a *siuzhet* that reorganizes the chronological story of a life in order to heighten certain dramatic elements of the plot. With the configuration of incidents completed, it will make the interpretive task easier to establish the underlying *fabula* as much as possible. Because of the inherent differences of communication between music and literature, establishing a completely precise chronology of story events remains impossible. But given what the analysis reveals concerning the temporal dimensions of the Fifth, one may ascertain a general outline of the plot. The symphony unfolds the story of the life of its protagonist, a figure inferred from the discursive shifts of Part I and which appears symbolically in Parts II and III. It begins with a past marked by tragedy, specifically with death. This could indicate the death of a beloved person, a personal fear of death, or just an expression of the reality of Death itself. In any case, this past experience causes great anguish for the protagonist. On the other hand, there remain positive elements of the past that emerge at various points. M3 most likely represents a happy memory of the deceased or, at least, a momentary reprieve from death-laden music of the *Trauermarsch*. Additionally, Trio 1 from the Scherzo expresses nostalgia for the past, but this is balanced by the melancholic, contemplative world of the Scherzo's Trio 2.

Moving into the present, the protagonist comes to the fore, not merely as a character acted upon by external events, but as one possessing the agency to comment, act, and change the given situation. As observed in Part I, the protagonist (in the form of an implied consciousness) reacts against the tragedies of the past with emotions of anger and grief. The presence of the *Ewigkeit* motive in the *Trauermarsch*'s Trios 1/2 and the second movement's primary/secondary themes suggests that, within this emotional outpouring, there remains hope for deliverance. Salvation does not come easily, however, with the failure of the D-major *chorale* signaling that redemption cannot come primarily from something external, but rather, from within. Part II represents the present tense in which the protagonist, now at home in a place of stability and unity with nature, faces continual threats to that stability; these are overcome (temporarily) only through sheer force of will. The mid-point of the Fifth plays out a romantic quest-narrative, involving the hero's attempt to synthesize the positive and negative elements of the past with the present in order to progress beyond these repetitive cycles. Through several stages of integration, the protagonist successfully achieves this goal, bringing about a positive conclusion to the problems of the present and opening the door toward an optimistic future.

The *fabula* now pivots toward the future, but before it projects forward, one last element remains to provide the wholeness implicitly sought in Part I and partially achieved in Part II. The *Adagietto* introduces the missing element—romantic love—and envisions the possibility of *redemption through love*. In this hoped-for future, the protagonist moves into higher stages of reconciliation. First, he reconciles the two worlds of his personality: the simple nature of his inner life and his complex relationship to the outside world, bridged by the spirit of creativity that drives him. Second, the protagonist moves outside of himself through a realization of the possibility of *redemption through love*, observed in the combination of the *romantic hero* and

Adagietto themes. Third, and finally, this last step allows the hero to recover the D-major chorale's promise of salvation not merely as something given, but as something earned through the struggles of life.

The View from Mahler: An Interpretation

Finally, I put forward the notion that the Fifth Symphony represents an attempt by Mahler to retell, and thus reexamine, the story of his life at a crossroads. Far from a detailed autobiography concerned with relaying a series of facts, the work represents Mahler's effort to construct a narrative identity as a fundamental aspect of worldview formation. Kearney summarizes Ricoeur's views on this matter, stating:

The narrative of self involves an ongoing process of self-constancy and self-rectification that requires imagination to synthesize the different horizons of past, present, and future. The narrative concept of self thus offers a dynamic notion of identity (*ipse*) that includes mutability and change within the cohesion of one lifetime (what Dilthey referred to as the *Zusammenhang des Lebens*). This means, for instance, that the identity of human subjects is deemed a constant task of reinterpretation in the light of new and old stories we tell about ourselves.¹⁸⁵

This work represents just such a reinterpretation, one in which Mahler wrestles with his past, reconciles it with his present situation, and projects his hopes for a happier future. To flesh out this basic outline, I will suggest some potential, though not definitive, ways in which the plot outlined above corresponds to features of Mahler's experience, drawing specifically from biographical and primary-source evidence concerning the narratives of the self he espoused.

To begin, how does Mahler's past (as of the composition of the work in 1901-2) reflect the tragic narrative of Part I? If one accepts that the protagonist of the Fifth functions as a stand-in for Mahler himself, then the obvious interpretation is that Part I describes the sorrows of

¹⁸⁵ Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur*, 108.

Mahler's life. And this is plausible, given that, as La Grange dramatically put it, "[f]ew people can have been so deeply marked from birth by the stigma of suffering. He was born of ill-matched parents, and his unhappy childhood was overshadowed by the successive deaths of eight of his brothers."¹⁸⁶ As the second child born into the Mahler family, he witnessed the fragility of life first-hand. Although most of those siblings died while in infancy, two of Mahler's brothers survived into young adulthood, causing their untimely deaths to impact him even more profoundly. Otto Mahler, nearly thirteen years his junior, committed suicide in 1895, which according to Alma, "was a terrible blow to Mahler."¹⁸⁷ Even more influential, given Mahler's youthful age, was the death of his brother Ernst in 1875. Alma relays that Mahler "loved his brother Ernst and suffered with him all through his illness up to the end. For months he scarcely left his beside and never tired of telling him stories."¹⁸⁸ Writing to his childhood friend Joseph Steiner in 1879, Mahler describes a vision of Ernst during a stroll, associating him with the character Ernst of Swabia, the subject of a proposed opera he was working on with Steiner as librettist:

And once again we roam familiar pastures together, and yonder stands the hurdy-gurdy man, holding out his hat in his skinny hand. And in the tuneless melody I recognized Ernst of Swabia's salutation, and he himself steps forth, opening his arms to me, and when I look closer, it is my poor brother; veils come floating down, the images, the notes, grow dim.¹⁸⁹

The ominous presence of the hurdy-gurdy man appears like a symbol of fate, as in the final song of Schubert's *Winterreise*. Regardless of whether or not Mahler specifically expressed his mourning over Ernst in Part I, the atmosphere of premature death that haunted Mahler's childhood finds concrete expression in the quotation of the first song of the *Kindertotenlieder*

¹⁸⁶ Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Mahler*, vol. 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 1.

¹⁸⁷ Alma Mahler-Werfel, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*, enlarged ed., ed. by Donald Mitchell, trans. by Basil Creighton (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), 11.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁸⁹ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 55.

during the *Trauermarsch*. One might connect the plodding death march of the first movement with these childhood traumas, which finds support in this statement related by Alma: “[h]e often said to me: ‘You are lucky. You were born with a silver spoon in your mouth. You can go your flowery way—no grim past, no family round your neck—but I have had to stagger on all my life with clods of earth weighing down my feet.’”¹⁹⁰

Of course, significant events in Mahler’s life, months before composition of the Fifth began, may serve as an alternative explanation for the tragedy of Part I. Before the summer of 1901, Mahler suffered a traumatic near-death experience. After assuming his post at the Vienna Court Opera in 1897, Mahler thrust himself into his new position with his characteristically strong work ethic. As La Grange reports, “[t]oward the end of 1900, Mahler’s health began to give cause for alarm. The nervous energy he expended on operas and concerts brought back his headaches and stomach-aches and caused a recurrence of his ‘subterranean troubles.’”¹⁹¹ Mahler ignored these early warnings and conducted the entirety of Wagner’s *Ring* in December, and in January 1901, his situation only worsened when he came down with a “serious bout of influenza.”¹⁹² After conducting a performance of *Die Zauberflöte* on February 24, Mahler’s tireless work and increasing illnesses finally took their toll. La Grange explains:

Mahler suffered a sudden and violent hemorrhage. As he had experienced these before, he ignored it for some time before calling [his sister] Justi, who was horrified to find him lying in a pool of blood. She telephoned immediately to Mahler’s physician (Dr. Singer), but the iced water baths he prescribed did not help, and they were obliged to call in a surgeon, Dr. Julius Hochenegg, whom they had difficulty in contacting. He immediately saw the gravity of the situation and said that ‘had he come half an hour later, it would

¹⁹⁰ Mahler-Werfel, *Gustav Mahler*, 12.

¹⁹¹ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 2, 316. “Subterranean troubles” refers to Mahler’s life-long gastro-intestinal issues, which, along with many other ailments, Fischer documents in his biography.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 316; 334.

have been too late.’ He managed to staunch the hemorrhage, which had been caused by a hemorrhoid located high up in the intestinal tract.¹⁹³

Although he made a fairly quick recovery, Mahler undoubtedly carried the emotional and physical weight of this experience into the summer of 1901 when he began composition on the Fifth Symphony.

Of course, it remains possible that the death to which Part I refers may be understood as a kind of spiritual death of attrition, particularly pertaining to his artistic endeavors. Similarly concerned with notions of identity, Barham puts forward an interpretation of the Fifth, seeing its wild mixture of high and low musical styles, musical genres, and wide-ranging emotional content, as a nomadic search for *Heimat* (home) as a place of rest and simplicity: “Mahler’s childhood was hardly a bed of roses, but perhaps even more because of this, in this Symphony the mature, cultured, extra-territorial, nomad Mahler seeks reconciliation with the mythically naïve, pure origin of his existence, and in nearing it, begins to know his Heimat—a space of innocence, free from irony, high, low, interior or exterior—for the first time.”¹⁹⁴ Barham points toward Mahler’s frequent references to the figure of Ahasuerus, the eternally wandering Jew, which he clearly adopted as an aspect of his narrative identity. In a joking manner, Mahler wrote to his friend Anton Krisper to inform him that, due to “a young lady who stays at her spinet the whole day long” living next door, “I am going like Ahasuerus to have to take up my walking stick again,” which he follows with the more serious remark, “[h]eaven knows whether I will ever settle down anywhere.”¹⁹⁵ Mahler spent much of his twenties and thirties moving from one conducting post to another, always progressing toward higher echelons of the operatic world. As

¹⁹³ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 2, 334.

¹⁹⁴ Jeremy Barham, “Mahler and Socio-Cultural Nomadism: The Case of the Fifth Symphony,” in *Gustav Mahler und die musikalische Moderne*, ed. Arnold Jacobshagen, 57-68 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011), 68.

¹⁹⁵ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 60.

he wrote to his sister Justine in 1891, “Hamburg is not exactly adequate ground for my nature to be able to run free. That is why again I only regard this place as a stopover—certainly I can’t deny that I am now tired of this eternal wandering, and long for ‘a home.’”¹⁹⁶

Beyond his difficulties as a conductor, he suffered even more on account of the reception of his works. He once exclaimed, “[i]f you could know my Calvary as a creative artist, if you could behold the ten years of continual repulse, disappointment and humiliation—having to shut away in a drawer work after work as each was completed, and, whenever, surmounting all obstacles, I succeeded in finding a public, it was only to meet with incomprehension.”¹⁹⁷ Mahler reveals another piece of his narrative identity: the artist as the sacred figure, despised and rejected by the world but, nevertheless, suffering to produce something of benefit for it. Mahler invoked Christian imagery on another occasion in conversation with Bauer-Lechner: “[w]hy do I have to suffer all this? Why must I take this fearful martyrdom upon myself? I was overwhelmed with boundless grief, not only for myself, but for all those who were nailed to the cross before me, because they wanted to give their best to the world, and for all those who will suffer the same fate after me.”¹⁹⁸ Considering the three explanations outlined—childhood trauma, serious illness, spiritual isolation—each offers a plausible explanation for the content of Part I. Narrative identity, as opposed to strict autobiography, allows for the acceptance all of these answers (and possibly others) as contributing to the expressive world of Part I.

Mahler’s identification with and conflation of Ahasuerus and Christ proves immensely helpful in understanding not only the suffering expressed in Part I, but also the complex musical world of Part II. Clearly, Mahler viewed the possibility of returning to Vienna as the solution to

¹⁹⁶ Stephen McClatchie, ed. and trans., *The Mahler Family Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 133.

¹⁹⁷ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 159.

¹⁹⁸ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 54.

his nomadic problem. Not only did he believe he would finally attain ideal working conditions as a conductor, Mahler hoped that he could establish himself as a composer, fulfilling his longing for both a place of rest and a sympathetic public. At long last, Mahler achieved this aim with his appointment to the Vienna Court Opera. To Arnold Berliner, he wrote, "I am going *home* and shall do my utmost to put an end to my wanderings so far as this life is concerned."¹⁹⁹ This attachment to Vienna stemmed from his experiences at the Vienna Conservatory, and his nostalgic attitude toward the city illuminates some elements of the Scherzo. With the use of the *waltz* topic in the Trio sections, one cannot help hearing an evocation of Viennese culture. Mahler chose to represent himself in the form of a protagonist character within the context of a *Ländler* topic, corresponding to associations with the *Volk*, with nature, and stability. One might also point to Mahler's birthplace and childhood home in Bohemia (a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) and his status as an outsider in Viennese culture to explain this identification, contrasted with the sophistication of cosmopolitan Vienna as represented in the Trio sections. The analysis of the Scherzo differentiated the expressive content of Trio 1 and Trio 2 as pertaining to innocence and experience. Thus, one may extrapolate an identification of Trio 1 with the idealized Vienna of Mahler's memory, the *Heimat* he longed for. Trio 2, on the other hand, represents the reality that Mahler's return to Vienna did not provide the stability he sought.

Several factors contributed to this disillusionment. Mahler inherited an opera company that needed a considerable amount of reform to suit his purposes. Shortly after assuming his post in 1897, he told Bauer-Lechner:

I constantly encounter the most extreme laxity and deep-rooted weaknesses in the whole company with whom I have to deal. Often I have to tear down everything and build it up afresh with the greatest difficulty during the very performance itself. I have a repertoire in which the noblest works stand beside the most commonplace. The stupidity and narrowmindedness of the performers and the audience usually confronts me like an

¹⁹⁹ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 221.

impenetrable wall. I have to labor like Sisyphus, consuming my best energies, my very life, but without being able to look to any goal or success! The worst of it is that my thousand worries never leave me time for myself.²⁰⁰

The sheer amount of work, particularly before Mahler appointed capable assistant conductors, took an enormous toll on him. Fischer describes it in this way:

Never again did Mahler have to work as hard as he did during these early years in Vienna. His Herculean conducting achievement had to be combined with directorial responsibilities. This excessive workload led not only to an almost total suspension of his compositional plans, it also meant that his private life was practically non-existent—and even for an individual as ascetic as Mahler, this was an imposition.²⁰¹

The imposition on his creative life proved especially painful. After the completion of the Third Symphony in 1896, three years passed before Mahler began work on his Fourth, the longest creative drought of his life.²⁰² Concerning the performance of his compositions, Bauer-Lechner relates that, during this period, Mahler declared, “[a]t the moment, I don’t care whether my works are accepted a few years earlier or later; I am such a stranger to myself these days that I often think I’m no longer the same person.”²⁰³ The picture becomes even clearer when one takes into account the resistance Mahler faced from the Viennese press. K. M. Knittel demonstrates that the negative reception of Mahler’s position, contrary to popular belief, did not only come from the overtly anti-Semitic press. Rather, a thorough examination of the reviews indicates that “Mahler was being judged not as a conductor or even as a reviser, but as a Jew” across the board.²⁰⁴ She further explains, “[i]ndeed, the power of the Jewish caricature depended on its ambiguity: the more subtle—or ‘objective’—the image, the more it was possible to interpret the

²⁰⁰ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 104.

²⁰¹ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 317-18.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 334.

²⁰³ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 104.

²⁰⁴ K. M. Knittel, “‘Polemik im Concertsaal,’ Mahler, Beethoven, and the Viennese Critics,” *19th-Century Music* 29, No. 3 (Spring 2006): 290. Knittel treats this subject even more extensively in her monograph: *Seeing Mahler: music and the language of anti-Semitism in fin-de-siècle Vienna* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

image as ‘reality,’ and thus be read as beyond reproach. Authors relied on their audience to understand the message without its being directly stated.”²⁰⁵ Combine this with Mahler’s health issues related to overwork and one can easily see how Trio 2 embodies many of the negative feelings associated with the Vienna of Mahler’s present.

It seems, then, that Mahler sought to express the complexity of his relationship to his environment in the Scherzo and the need to reconcile its disparate elements. He described the movement as “a human being in the full light of day, in the prime of his life,” which corresponds to the interpretation of the protagonist figure at the heart of the Scherzo as a stand-in for Mahler himself.²⁰⁶ The focus on the integrative processes at work in this movement also finds support in another of Mahler’s descriptions: “[t]he movement is enormously difficult to work out because of its structure, and because of the utmost skill demanded by the complex interrelationships of all its details. The apparent confusion must, as in a Gothic cathedral, be resolved in the highest order and harmony.”²⁰⁷ One might suspect that this need to reconcile past tragedies with the complexities of the present constitutes a final stage in the process of grief. Mahler’s views on artistic creation, however, may offer an even richer explanation. In numerous letters and conversations, he expressed the conviction that suffering and creativity were linked. In fact, suffering functions as a necessary precondition for composition: “if my existence were simply to run on as peacefully as a meadow brook, I don’t think that I would ever again be able to write anything worth while.”²⁰⁸ Concerning the Third Symphony, Mahler wrote, “[t]he composer of such a work has to suffer terrible birth-pangs, and before it all assumes order in his mind,

²⁰⁵ Knittel, “Polemik im Concertsaal,” 291.

²⁰⁶ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 173.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 172.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

building up, surging up, he is often preoccupied, self-immersed, dead to the outside world.”²⁰⁹ In a quotation that brings several threads of this chapter together, Bauer-Lechner recounts, “Mahler said that his works were always children of sorrow; of the most profound inner experience . . . ‘To me, however, the creation of a work of art resembles that of a pearl, which, born of the oyster’s terrible sufferings, bestows its treasure on the world.’”²¹⁰ With this statement, Mahler not only reiterates his view of the connection between art and life, he also reaffirms his sacred mission as an artist who suffers on behalf of mankind. Thus, the reconciliation achieved in Part II dramatizes this shift from suffering to creation.

The *Adagietto*, more so than other movements, corresponds to a specific, biographical event. On 7 November 1901, shortly after Mahler’s productive summer in which he began work on the Fifth, he met Alma Schindler, and within a matter of weeks, their relationship substantially changed.²¹¹ Alma already knew of Mahler as the conductor of the Vienna Court Opera, and the first mention of him in her diary comes from 1898, recorded after a performance of *Siegfried*.²¹² After their initial meeting in 1901, not quite a month passed before they became engaged, and on 9 March of the following year, they married.²¹³ Within a roughly four-month period, Mahler and Alma went from strangers to husband and wife. Precisely at this juncture, Mahler composed the *Adagietto*. Mahler’s friend and conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra Wilhelm Mengelberg provides an important piece of evidence linking this movement to Alma herself. In his personal score of the symphony, he wrote, “[t]his Adagietto was Gustav Mahler’s declaration of love for Alma! Instead of a letter, he sent her this manuscript without further

²⁰⁹ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 190.

²¹⁰ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 38.

²¹¹ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 2, 418.

²¹² Alma Mahler-Werfel, *Diaries: 1898-1902*, trans. Antony Beaumont (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), 6.

²¹³ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 155; Henry-Louis de La Grange and Günther Weiss, eds., *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, trans. Antony Beaumont (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 1.

explanation. She understood and wrote back that he should come!!! Both have told me this!”²¹⁴ If reliable, this statement implies that Mahler wrote the movement at some point during December 1901. As Floros notes, “[i]n a letter of 5 December, he was still using ‘*Sie*,’ the formal form of address, but on 8 December he used the familiar form ‘*Du*.’ On 7 December he and Alma had become secretly engaged.”²¹⁵ One can speculate that this brief window of time corresponds with the *Adagietto*’s composition. Therefore, the beginning of Part III introduces Mahler’s love for Alma as well as Alma as a character in the narrative. The middle-section (B2/3) anticipates future happiness with her as the fulfillment of the promise of the *Ewigkeit* motive. In the Rondo-Finale, Mahler imagines this expectation coming to fruition. Instead of searching for *Heimat* in Vienna, Mahler finds his desired rest in Alma herself. The outpouring of creative energy that characterizes much of the Rondo-Finale emerges directly out of the reconciliation of past and present, channeling past tragedies toward productive ends.

The above summary of the Fifth’s underlying *fabula* explores the ways in which the musical discourse moves into successively higher levels of reconciliation, and all of these pertain to issues surrounding Mahler’s narrative identity. First, the integration of high and low musical styles may symbolize the converging identities Mahler embraced as a Bohemian Jew and a Viennese Catholic; it may also reflect his attempt to integrate his inner and outer life. Second, the union of Mahler and Alma goes hand in hand with the merging of the *romantic hero* and *Adagietto* themes. Third, and finally, the recovery of the D-major *chorale* points toward an important aspect of Mahler’s worldview, one that only begins to explicitly emerge as an expressive idea in the middle-period works. Whereas the *Wunderhorn* symphonies often feature dramatic moments of *Durchbruch* to indicate divine intervention from above, the Fifth

²¹⁴ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 154.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 155.

Symphony critiques this type of *Deus ex machina* denouement in favor of a more complex resolution. The appearance of the D-major *chorale* in the second movement does not prove sufficient for transcending the tragedy. Instead, salvation requires the struggle found in Part II in order to come to its full realization. In other words, the worldview hypothesis at work in the Fifth Symphony posits that salvation requires both grace (unexpected, unearned, divine) and heroic struggle (deliberate, earned, human), expressed creatively in in artistic expression and romantic love. This notion forms a deep presupposition of Mahler's worldview, one that will be explored at the conclusion of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Eternity Lost: Mahler, Alma, and the *Ewigkeit* Motive in the Sixth Symphony

In her memoir, *Gustav Mahler: Erinnerungen und Briefe*, Alma Mahler describes the summer of 1904, which she spent with her husband in Maiernigg, during which Mahler completed his Sixth Symphony. According to Alma's account, he disclosed specific programmatic details that she records, stating, "[a]fter he had drafted the first movement he came down from the wood to tell me he had tried to express me in a theme. 'Whether I've succeeded, I don't know; but you'll have to put up with it.'" She went on to clarify, "[t]his is the great soaring theme of the first movement of the Sixth Symphony."¹ She also related that Mahler described the Scherzo as depicting the "arrhythmic games of the two little children" and the Finale as an autobiographical sketch of his own downfall, caused by "three blows of fate."²

In an article on the "Alma theme," Monahan discusses the issues surrounding her account and its potential significance for interpreting the Sixth. After noting that "[f]or three generations, critics have more or less taken Alma at her word," he observes, that, simultaneously, "Alma's memoirs have routinely come under fire for their inaccuracies and embellishments. Indeed two of the three portraits she asserts vis-à-vis the Sixth [specifically, those related to the Scherzo and Finale] are partly or entirely fabricated."³ Surprisingly, Monahan does not attempt to test the validity of Alma's claims, instead preferring to explore "the hermeneutic ends to which Alma's

¹ Mahler-Werfel, *Gustav Mahler*, 70.

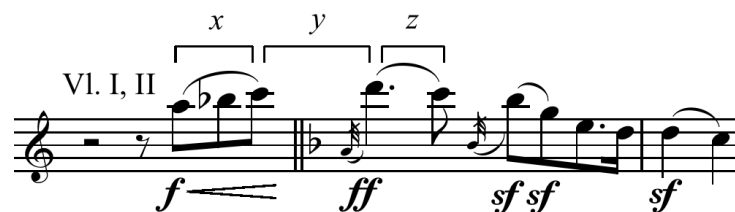
² Ibid.

³ Seth Monahan, "'I have tried to capture you . . .': Rethinking the 'Alma' Theme from Mahler's Sixth Symphony," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 64, No. 1 (Spring 2011): 119-20.

claims, once embraced, might be used.”⁴ Thus, the question still stands as to the reliability of Alma’s testimony. The truth or falsehood of her statements about this theme create profound ramifications for our understanding of the Sixth and nearly all of Mahler’s works for one reason: it reveals a significant facet of Mahler’s worldview with particularly grim ramifications in the context of Mahler’s “Tragic” Symphony.

Those familiar with Mahler’s *oeuvre* will not fail to recognize the “Alma theme’s” first five notes (consisting of components *x*, *y*, and *z* in Example 3.1 below), as an independent gesture/motive with a myriad of manifestations that span virtually the entirety of Mahler’s creative output. Philip T. Barford, who first explored this recurring feature in “Mahler: A Thematic Archetype,” claimed, “I have counted ninety-two thematic passages which are either simple statements, elaborations or chromatic variations of this simple series.”⁵ The gestural flexibility of this motive, both in terms of pitch content and rhythm, allows Mahler to adapt it to a wide variety of expressive contexts.

Example 3.1: Symphony No. 6/I, mm. 76-78.



Understanding this and other appearances of the motive and its connection to Alma necessitates an investigation of the historical background of this musical feature, its use in Mahler’s works,

⁴ Monahan, “I have tried to capture you . . .,” 121.

⁵ Philip T. Barford, “Mahler: A Thematic Archetype,” *Music Review* 21, No. 4 (November 1960): 297.

and the extra-musical associations it accrues over time. But before beginning that investigation, I will first examine the narrative at work in the first movement of the Sixth. By doing so, I hope to continue the methods established in the previous chapter concerning a narratively encoded worldview. This will lead to an investigation of the “Alma theme” in order to understand how that musical symbol relates to the work’s narrative design. The chapter will conclude by articulating the symbol’s significance in Mahler’s worldview and what that means in the context of the Sixth.

SYMPHONY NO. 6/I: NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

Even without Alma’s anecdote, the structure of the first movement provides interpretive. The exposition clearly delineates two themes, primary and secondary, connected by a brief transition. Monahan observes that the maximal contrast between the aggressive primary theme and the lyrical secondary theme connects this sonata-form movement to other “Dutchman-style” examples. Named after Wagner’s Overture to *Der fliegende Holländer*, “[s]tructures of this sort divide into two broad, affectively contrasting, and explicitly gendered blocks” with the “Alma theme” corresponding to the role of the feminine in this scheme.⁶ The movement’s form continuously sets these thematic ideas against one another, producing a narrative that resolves only in the last moments of the Coda.

After a brief Introduction, the primary theme (P), an A-minor march, unfolds itself in three sections (mm. 6-25, mm. 25-42, and mm. 43-56). Monahan describes this as three “statements,” each consisting of two periods (statement 1a/b, statement 2a/b, and statement 3a/b).⁷ The first period of each iteration (a) provides a clear thematic statement of P, and the

⁶ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 116.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

second period (b) develops those motives while deriving new ones from the P-material. This process quickly becomes quite elaborate. Monahan explains, “[t]he P-theme is, above all, a tour de force of Mahlerian developing variation. Its much-vaunted organicism operates on many levels at once, with motives and even entire phrases deftly recycled as seemingly new material.”⁸ From a more explicitly narrative angle, one might view the P-theme as cycling through several stages of materialization, collapse, and reconstitution, revealing a symmetrically-designed P-complex.

The introduction accomplishes two things simultaneously. First, it saturates the listener in the topical environment of the minor-mode *march*, which suggests an encroaching threat. Second, it builds up energy that will release with the first thematic statement of P, an act of materialization taking raw motivic material (the pounding, repeated A’s and dotted rhythms) and forming it into a definitive shape. The first statement of P (1a) launches a properly thematic utterance, but at measure 11, with a wail from the horns, it over-reaches and collapses just six bars after it began. In the previous measure, the cellos and basses restated P’s opening two measures, which the trombones take up as the collapse takes place. Already, Mahler begins layering polyphonic lines into the texture.

After the collapse, the second period of the first section (1b) begins a process of reconstitution, introducing new motives and drawing power from the pounding quarter notes of the opening. This builds to the second thematic statement in measure 25 (2a) with even more explosive energy. Despite this, P collapses again in measure 29, but concurrently with the descent from the phrase’s highpoint, a new motive appears that will become increasingly important over the course of the movement. Monahan calls this P^{1.7}, since it constitutes the

⁸ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 107.

seventh independently discernable motive in the P-complex (he saves “P²” for a new theme in the development). I refer to it as the *collapse* motive (although it does not always appear in contexts of thematic *collapse*). It appears in the solo trumpet from measures 29-30 (during the collapse) and, later, in definitive form for the first trombone from mm.34-36 (during the following reconstitution phase).

Example 3.2: Symphony No. 6/I, mm. 34-36



As expected, the music attempts to reconstitute P with another developing section (2b), which again returns to the Introduction’s repeated A’s in the bass. Now, the developmental sub-section extends even further (compare 1b’s 9 measures to 2b’s 12 measures) and features the *collapse* motive as a counter melody. The third thematic statement begins in measure 43 (3a), but its chromatically descending bass makes it the most unstable one yet. After upward-rushing figures in the violins and woodwinds, this third statement ruptures at measure 47, followed by an extended *collapse*. Accompanied by the *collapse* motive, this descent reduces the primary theme to nothingness, but before it completely disappears, a three-note descending motive appears (mm. 52-54 in the trombones) that will play a significant role later in the movement. The last word goes to the famous motto of the symphony with its distinctive march rhythm and sinking A major-to-minor triad.

Example 3.3: Symphony No. 6/I: mm. 57-60

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Trp. 1. 2. 3. (Trumpets) and Timp. (Timpani). The top staff is for the trumpets, written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/8 time signature. It features a melodic line that starts with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and then transitions to a piano (*p*) dynamic. The bottom staff is for the timpani, written in bass clef with a 3/8 time signature, showing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. A vertical line separates the two measures, indicating the point of the dynamic change.

One can already see P as a threatening but unstable entity, and despite its tendency toward collapse, its developmental potential allows for its re-emerge in new forms.

The transition's (T) unusual qualities feature into many of the discussions of this movement. The topical contrast with the march immediately sets it apart in an entirely different expressive space. The *chorale* topic suggests church music with the delicate woodwind orchestration evoking a quiet organ sonority. But the consistently ambiguous harmony betrays the hope for spiritual reassurance. More ominous still, the opening motive of the P-complex persists in the pizzicato strings, reinforcing P's ability to transform, even after *collapse*, into new musical contexts. Lastly, this transition famously does not fulfill its functional role. As Norman Del Mar phrases it, "this Chorale plays no part in the argument but serves rather as an interlude."⁹ It remains in A minor throughout, merely trailing off and landing on a chord that functions ambiguously as an augmented dominant in both A minor and F major. In terms of narrative, T represents a shift in the level of discourse, following Hatten's conception. It exists on a different plane from the P-complex's march, but simultaneously, it does not entirely escape it. While Mahler explicitly states that the tempo should not change (*Stets das gleiche Tempo*), the

⁹ Norman Del Mar, *Mahler's Sixth Symphony: A Study* (London: Eulenburg Books, 1980), 35.

listener will undoubtedly perceive a temporal shift due to the prevailing half- and quarter-note rhythms (excepting the pizzicato accompaniment). As an example of higher-level subjective reflection, T exists not as a continuation of P but as an entirely separate entity, expressing spiritual ambiguity in the face of P's threatening presence.

The "Alma theme" follows as the secondary theme of the exposition (S). As with the primary-theme complex, S consists of three sections (mm. 77-90, mm. 91-98, and mm. 99-115). Viewed narratively, however, one may consider S as unfolding in one continuous statement, interrupted by the interpolation of foreign elements (mm. 91-98), which then resumes as it moves toward a cadence. The expressive effect of S creates a maximal contrast with P. But as Monahan and others point out, this contrast only pertains to its lyrical quality and the density of its accompaniment. The S-theme, in fact, borrows elements from P: (1) the gestural descent that follows its initial rising motive (mm. 77-78) derives from measures 8-9 of P; (2) the upward striving of the first violins in measures 87-89 corresponds to a similar gesture from P (mm. 34-36); and (3) almost exactly the same collapse-as-closure moment in measure 89 occurs in each of the three statements of P.¹⁰

This last derivation in particular reveals S as unstable in a manner similar to P, but a notable difference comes in what immediately follows: the intrusion of the *march*, including the *collapse* motive, in the middle of S's presentation (mm. 91-98). Without sharing the ability of P to re-materialize itself after *collapse*, S reveals, in spite of its vivacity, a weakness. This weakness forms the subject of considerable criticism, from the time of Mahler's contemporaries to the present. Monahan argues:

[T]hese massive orchestral means are put to relatively meager musical ends. For all its brilliance and vitality, S1 [as opposed to the intrusive march element, which he labels S2] is likely to strike us as curiously "undercomposed." By comparison to P, in particular,

¹⁰ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 115-16.

there is a striking lack of variety and internal development. . . . On these grounds, it is easy to hear the theme as precariously overextended, capable of achieving its ample dimensions only by stretching its scant melodic/motivic resources to the limits of good taste. And when the music does finally move to escape its repetitive circling, clearly intending to climax, it merely lapses into material recycled from the P-group.¹¹

The “material recycled from the P-group” refers to the intrusion of the march topic after the *collapse* at measure 89. The uncanny effect of its placement within the middle of S largely stems from its bizarre orchestration. The melody in the oboes and clarinets, the punchy chords in the brass, pizzicato violins, and even the glockenspiel, all produce a strangely playful rendition of P, specifically the *collapse* motive. One could interpret this in a variety of ways, but perhaps the most natural reading is that this moment represents another vivid example of Mahler’s tendency toward black or ironic humor. The intrusion of P makes a mockery of S’s attempted escape through its ability, by now clearly demonstrated, to appear unexpectedly. Through an agential force of will, S resumes at measure 99, redoubling its over-the-top quality with even richer accompaniment. Astonishingly, the punchy brass chords briefly continue underneath S’s soaring return (mm. 99-100). The theme builds toward even greater heights until, once again, it collapses under its own weight. As the *collapse* gestures accompany the liquidation of S, however, it achieves closure with a PAC in F major in measure 115, fulfilling its formal obligations.

Monahan views this moment as highly significant:

Given the rarity of such gestures in later Mahler—to say nothing of the anachronistic repeat signs that immediately follow—we might well hear this untroubled arrival carrying “archaic” connotations of its own . . . And yet that very “effortlessness” will take on a new, more sinister aspect as the Sixth unfolds: as we see the cadential ambitions of its S-themes thwarted with increasing violence, the radiant confidence of this major-mode arrival will come to seem disastrously premature.¹²

¹¹ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 114.

¹² *Ibid.*, 104.

As the previous chapter discussed, Monahan contends that Mahler employed these genre conventions of sonata form to correspond with his narrative purposes. Whether or not one accepts that the presence of this EEC carries the weight of narrative significance to the degree that Monahan does, it brings to a close what many analysts consider a rather traditional start to the movement. With the identities of P, T, and S firmly established, especially after the repeated exposition, these elements come directly into conflict during the remainder of the movement.

Most analysts divide the development into several sections or parts. Hefling describes it as “bipartite,” noting the substantial presence of A minor in its first half as well as the “relative absence of the motivic and contrapuntal virtuosity prominent in the Fifth.”¹³ Monahan divides it into three episodes.¹⁴ This no doubt explains the disjunctions that frame its central episode, but one could alternatively view it as an extended development of the P-complex, which comes to a halt during an interpolated episode, then resumes. Seen in this way, the entire development expands and reverses the presentation of S in the exposition. Reverting to A minor, the development begins at measure 123 with what Del Mar describes as a “*Marche macabre*”; Monahan further specifies this as a “nightmarish miasma of dissociated secondary motives.”¹⁵ Notably, the rhythmic component of the motto forms an almost constant presence. This culminates in a statement of P in E minor (m. 144), the first new tonal center explored thus far, returning P to its original guise with one notable difference: it does not collapse.

The development of subsidiary P-motives resumes, again in A minor, at measure 152 for only six measures, and rather than building toward another statement of P, a new theme emerges, which includes the first reference to S in the development.

¹³ Hefling, “Song and Symphony (II). From *Wunderhorn* to Rückert and the middle-period symphonies,” 120.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Del Mar, *Mahler’s Sixth Symphony: A Study*, 37; Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 120.

Example 3.4: Symphony No. 6/I, mm. 158-63



More precisely, the new theme includes the S-theme's first five notes as an independent motive. Consequently, this segment of S connects it to the myriad of other manifestations across Mahler's works, which will be explored below. The immediate effect of the new theme, perhaps attributable to the presence of this five-note S-motive, comes with the immediate development of S itself. This occurs following liquidation of the new theme (mm. 170-77), accompanied by the three-note descending motive that arose initially out of P's expositional collapse (mm. 52-54) and a new ascending dotted figure (descending in some instances) in the low strings and bassoons (m. 173). S returns with a D-major chord that sinks quickly to D minor (another subtle reference to the motto). The S-theme, in a corrupted minor-mode form, acquires the *march* topic of P. This once again demonstrates P's power to infiltrate and subsume all contrasting elements. From measures 187-95, the corrupted S-theme begins to merge with the new P-theme, but when it appears that the music might build to another P-related climax, a sudden shift in the discourse begins the substantial interpolation at measure 196.

The abruptness of this shift causes an extreme contrast with the forward-driving development of P that characterized the entirety of the section thus far. The tempo slows (*Allmählig etwas gehaltener*), but more importantly, the march rhythms cease at the arrival of a long-held C-major chord with an added sixth. The sonority serves two purposes: (1) it creates ambiguity by retaining an implicit A-minor chord within this positive context; and (2) the added

sixth expresses a sense of timelessness, a technique Mahler used in other works (consider the final measures of *Das Lied von der Erde*, featuring this exact chord, to express the eternal). Monahan reflects, “[c]ritics have universally heard this . . . as an expression of extreme physical or psychological Otherness, often emphasizing the music’s dreamlike qualities.”¹⁶ Given Hatten’s insights on rhetorical shifts and those stemming from previous chapter’s analysis of the Fifth Symphony, one might hear this passage’s “Otherness” as both temporal and contemplative. From the beginning of this section (m. 196) to the emergence of a new S-variant (m. 217), Mahler creates a free-floating musical space in which elements of P, T, and S all make appearances. The suspended quality of the music also stems from the use of pedal points, meandering violin and celesta chords, and most unusually, cowbells.

This particular sonic feature requires further discussion. During the rehearsals for the Seventh Symphony’s premiere—a work that also utilizes cowbells—Mahler clarified his intentions for employing this unusual sound. Summarizing Mahler’s comments, Floros explains, “he did not use the bells as a pastoral symbol, but to create the mood of ‘the loneliness of being far away from the world.’ He wanted only to create ‘a sound of nature, echoing from a great distance.’ This passage sounded to him ‘as though he stood on the highest peak, in the face of eternity.’”¹⁷ One can easily apply this to the Sixth’s use of cowbells, an interpretation which finds corroboration in one of Mahler’s earliest surviving letters. Many commentators neglect to mention this obvious connection, but Michael Kennedy, citing this letter, understands that the cowbells “vividly recalled his youth.”¹⁸ Written to his friend Joseph Steiner in 1879, Mahler recounts his joys and sorrows in melodramatic style:

¹⁶ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 120.

¹⁷ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 165.

¹⁸ Kennedy, *Mahler*, 141.

Dear Steiner! So you want to know what I have been doing all this time? A very few words suffice.—I have eaten and drunk, I have been awake and I have slept, I have wept and laughed, I have stood [on] mountains, where the breath of God bloweth where it listeth, I have been on the heath, and the tinkling of cow-bells has lulled me into dreams. Yet I have not escaped my destiny; doubt pursues me wherever I go; there is nothing that affords me complete enjoyment, and even my most serene smile is accompanied by tears.¹⁹

This supports the interpretation of the cowbells and the rhetorical shift in which they occur as related to contemplation and memory. It also explains the contradiction between Mahler's insistence that the cowbells did not symbolize the pastoral while, simultaneously, creating a "sound of nature." Apparently, he wanted to deflect a too-literal interpretation of a pastoral scene of literal actual cows roaming the countryside. Instead, he evokes the *pastoral* topic to induce the feeling of such a scene, perhaps one recalled from memory.

At measure 217, the free-floating motives give way to a new variant of S in G major, now "liberated," to use Monahan's word, from the *march* topic.²⁰

Example 3.5: Symphony No. 6/I, mm. 217-20



The key changes to E-flat major at measure 225, which analysts often note both as the farthest tonal remove from A minor and as the key of the symphony's Andante. While the new variant

¹⁹ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 55. the brackets indicate Martner's editorial marking.

²⁰ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 119.

continues in the strings and flutes, the solo horn presents S in its original form as counterpoint.

Monahan describes the significance of this moment:

The rhetorical transformation of S1 in this E-flat major enclave is striking. Here, at last, the theme finds its true voice, singing not just the stock declamations that the exposition repeated ad nauseam, but a long, supple line, delicate in its expression and nuanced in its modulation, enfolding in a finely spun contrapuntal texture. This is S1 in its most idealized, rhetorically purified expression; all that was “defective” about this music in the exposition, all that was contrived or decadent, is corrected here. For a fleeting Utopian moment, the feminine impulse is at last shorn of its derivative march elements and permitted to dream its own unfolding in the rapt pastoral style of Mahler’s early secondary themes.²¹

Of course, this does not last, and after the return of the pedal point, meandering chords, cowbells, and T material (along with brief *fanfare* figures), the interpolation ends with what might seem, at first, like a euphoric build-up to a positive climax. P-motives suddenly intrude at measure 251 (*Tempo I. Subito*), specifically, with the falling three-note motive and the *collapse* motive. While this section begins in B major (perhaps as residual positivity from the interpolation), it quickly turns to B minor (m. 260). T also plays an important role with its ambiguous harmony (for example, the major-minor shift that occurs in mm. 265-66). In a tremendous build-up of orchestral forces, the three-note motive pushes upward chromatically toward the recapitulation as if through sheer force of will.

Through the power of the agential push toward *Durchbruch*, the recapitulation begins in A major, but it quickly destabilizes and collapses (corresponding to the gestural *collapse* seen in the initial presentation of P from the exposition) back into A minor at measure 290. In this section, P unfolds in almost the exact manner as before. After its third statement, it ruptures (m. 326), eliding the collapse with a statement of the motto. T appears in transformation: a diminution (first noticeable in the development, mm. 271-72) that completely alters its character

²¹ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 122.

from hymn-like and mysterious to trivial and fleeting. Mahler achieves that not only rhythmically, but through orchestration (celesta, off-beat pizzicato accompaniment). Most importantly, S returns not as an outburst of maximal contrast but, instead, hesitantly (mm. 348-51) and then gradually more fully until its climax and collapse at measure 361. In this guise, S does not constitute a proper thematic statement. Instead, its presence amounts merely to an accumulation of its motives. Furthermore, the recapitulation of S occurs in the wrong key of D major, which produces a false ESC in measure 365. Monahan explains, “this anomaly . . . has roots in the development, since we can easily hear S1’s self-assured D major as a reprisal for its *D-minor* debasement in episode one. That is to say, we might hear the failed reprise not as a random mishap but rather as part of the broader emancipatory strategy.”²² While a minor victory of the development’s events creates a feeling of optimism, the recapitulation ends with the central drama still unresolved.

The burden of resolution falls to the coda, which substantially retreads the events of the development. Monahan notes, “many of [the Development] section’s signature events occur here, and nearly always in their original order . . . The most significant difference . . . is that the coda compresses its predecessor’s irregular P-S-P episodic layout into a more normative bipartite structure, with broad P- and S-complexes in succession.”²³ The quiet, E-minor return of P that begins the coda suddenly gives way to an outburst of P-derived material in D major (m. 382), the key of S’s false ESC. After returning to E minor, P’s development continues with an even more sinister quality than before. Alongside familiar P-related motives (such as the *collapse* motive), new motives emerge, continuing the process of re-materialization seen throughout the movement. Some of these elements, Monahan observes, prefigure ideas that will appear in the

²² Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 124-25.

²³ *Ibid.*, 125.

Finale.²⁴ Out of this bleak discourse, S begins to reemerge. In measures 408-10, the horns intone the theme's first five notes, followed later by its descending gesture in measure 413. For a brief moment (mm. 414-16), S fully returns in A major.²⁵

Whatever solace this moment provides, it quickly subsides with a modulation to E-flat minor—the negative polarity of the development's positive interpolation. Further, this modulation corresponds to the return of the intrusive S-theme *march* (including its bizarre orchestration, particularly the use of *glockenspiel*). This constitutes the bleakest passage of the entire movement (mm. 421-28), taking the most disturbing element of the exposition and transplanting it into the parallel minor of the key associated with *pastoral* freedom. In spite of this, the hoped-for moment of *Durchbruch* finally occurs at measure 444. One might infer, then, that whatever turns the tide away from the dominant P-complex toward a victorious S-theme occurs between the end of this dysphoric distortion and the breakthrough itself. Monahan insightfully connects this transition to the development's interpolation: “[a]t m. 429 it opens into a clearing that revives, in less vaporous form, elements of the development's *Naturlaut*: tremulous upper-voice pedal-chords, anacrusic fanfares, and the C-major tonality that has so far always been a direct or indirect harbinger of S.”²⁶ Additionally, the S-theme retains its march-like dotted rhythms, which allows the *Durchbruch* to take place.

This builds toward measure 444 where the explosion of sound from the percussion battery precedes the announcement of S in the trumpets finally, and firmly, in A major. After this moment of breakthrough, the horns sound out a conflation of S and the *collapse* motive, now in a positive transformation.

²⁴ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 125.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 127.

Example 3.6: Symphony No. 6/I, mm. 449-50



In the excitement, the *collapse* motive appears several times (mm. 467-72), leading to a great and symbolically potent climax. This giant crash of sound at measure 473, according to most commentators, clearly foreshadows the tragic outcome of the final movement. Over a D-major chord, a harsh dissonance occurs following the first three notes of S, and its subsequent appoggiatura, which superimposes a G-sharp above this chord. The resolution of the non-chord tone relieves the tension, but in measure 474, the D-major chord sinks to minor in a final statement of the major-to-minor motto. As Hefling notes, this casts doubt over the victory just achieved, suggesting the conflict may not be fully resolved.²⁷ Strangely, Monahan takes a different view, but his interpretation will be considered later. The movement ends in a noisy, if frantic, fanfare of S-motives, culminating in one final statement of S—the “Alma theme”—as the victor over the resilient P-complex, completing the narrative of the movement.

WORLDVIEW SYMBOLIZED: THEORY AND PRACTICE

“Symbol” Defined

This lengthy detour through the narrative of 6/I demonstrates the significance of the “Alma theme” and how it functions in the initiation of a narrative—or perhaps, the continuation

²⁷ Hefling, “Song and Symphony (II). From *Wunderhorn* to Rückert and the middle-period symphonies,” 120.

of one begun in the Fifth Symphony, as I will argue. But a thorough understanding of the motive that forms of the basis of the “Alma theme” (and that of the Sixth as a whole) necessitates an investigation into the S-theme’s relationship to Alma as well as a consideration of its symbolic function in Mahler’s worldview. After examining the motive in detail, this case study will return to the Sixth’s narrative. First, the word “symbol” needs defining. As discussed in Chapter One, Ricoeur maintains that symbols constitute an integral part of an artist’s narrative competency (mimesis₁), even further, of narratives themselves. In *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur argues that “[i]f, in fact, human action can be narrated, it is because it is always already articulated by signs, rules, and norms. It is always already symbolically mediated.”²⁸ A problem arises from the myriad of possible definitions of “symbol,” so the following will attempt to provide a functional definition, useful for the hermeneutic purpose at hand. Umberto Eco, in *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, emphasizes the tendency of symbols to refer to devices that carry vague associations, resistant to definitive interpretation.²⁹ He argues that “[a] symbol has to be textually produced,” initially appearing inconsequential but given special weight through salient use in a narrative. He ultimately concludes that “[t]he symbol says clearly only that it is a semiotic machine devised to function according to the symbolic mode.”³⁰ Put another way, the significance afforded to symbols by the text merely points to the fact that they produce meanings, not to any precise meaning that would limit its meaning.

Frye, on the other hand, defines symbol broadly as “any unit of any literary structure that can be isolated for critical attention,” and his views align with Eco’s in terms of the potential of

²⁸ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 57.

²⁹ Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 130.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 157, 158, 161.

their “manifold” or “polysemous” meaning.³¹ He discusses four levels of symbols, following the four traditional stages of Medieval biblical hermeneutics: “Literal and Descriptive,” “Formal,” “Mythical,” and “Anagogic.” In the first phase, subtitled, “Symbol as Motif and Sign,” Frye describes symbols as “verbal units which, conventionally and arbitrarily, stand for and point to things outside the place where they occur.”³² In the “Formal” phase, “the units . . . are those which show an analogy of proportion between the poem and the nature which it imitates.”³³ He continues, “[w]e are accustomed to associate the term ‘nature’ primarily with the external physical world, and hence we tend to think of an image as primarily a replica of a natural object. But of course both words are far more inclusive: nature takes in the conceptual or intelligible order as well as the spatial one, and what is usually called an ‘idea’ may be a poetic image also.”³⁴ Beyond the one-to-one relationship between signifier and signified in the first phase, this level opens symbolic representation to a broader range of associations. In the “Mythical” phase, symbols function as archetypes, defined as “a symbol which connects one poem with another and thereby helps to unify and integrate our literary experience.”³⁵ The final phase, “Anagogic,” refers to symbols of universal significance. Frye explains, “some symbols are images of things common to all men, and therefore have a communicable power which is potentially unlimited.”³⁶

The term “symbol,” in the following investigation, will synthesize the contributions of these thinkers. Ricoeur provides the insight (itself taken from Ernst Cassirer) that “symbolic forms are cultural processes that articulate experience.”³⁷ Understanding the symbolic forms that

³¹ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 71, 72.

³² *Ibid.*, 73.

³³ *Ibid.*, 84.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

³⁷ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 57.

pre-existed Mahler's appropriation of musical symbolism will ground his compositional technique in historical practices. The notion from Eco that "[a] symbol has to be textually produced" compels an investigation into the emergence of this particular Mahlerian symbol, the contexts in which it appears, and the relationship between these appearances. Finally, Frye's layers of symbolic interpretation challenge Eco's notion that symbols only constitute vague signifiers. From a symbol's immediate context to the broadest expressive level, all four of these phases form relevant aspects of Mahler's use of the musical symbol found in the "Alma theme." While this investigation will initially focus on Frye's first two phases, it will lead toward broader meanings through intertextual connections and its relationship to deeper philosophical/religious ideas.

Historical Background

Mahler's habit of using motivic symbols, even across multiple works, reflects a relatively common practice among composers of the nineteenth century. In *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content in Nineteenth-Century Music*, Christopher Allen Reynolds discusses this issue, stating, "[a]lready by the mid-nineteenth century there is ample evidence that musicians and music lovers routinely made associations between motives and themes in different works, usually calling them 'reminiscences.'"³⁸ Brown demonstrates this in his analysis of Brahms's Third Symphony. He makes the important point that, even with this most "absolute" of composers, Brahms utilizes unifying mottos and ciphers—the F/A-flat/F motto as "*Frei aber Froh*"—and references the work of other composers in several of his compositions.³⁹

³⁸ Christopher Allen Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 3.

³⁹ A. Peter Brown, "Brahms' Third and the New German School," *The Journal of Musicology* 2, No. 4 (Autumn 1983): 445, 452.

Similarities between works do not necessarily indicate a deliberate connection, and Reynolds believes that most scholars view such similarities as meaningless coincidences. But, “[c]ounteracting this view are several writers who have proposed that in some cases at least, composers did use motives to refer to ideas, people, or other musical compositions.”⁴⁰ Floros clearly holds to this second view, declaring, “[t]he more one delves into the symphonic music of the 19th century, the clearer it becomes that it harbors an incredibly rich musical wealth of symbols, the existence of which is generally unknown or is not even suspected.”⁴¹ By quoting motives from the works of others as well as from themselves, nineteenth-century composers created layers of meaning through the use of pre-existing symbols.

Due to his historical position as a creative artist of the *fin de siècle*, Mahler undoubtedly absorbed and continued this practice. While in many ways his music looks forward to developments of the early twentieth century, Mahler’s symphonies clearly draw from and extend the conventions of the genre from the previous century. Floros notes certain affinities with Beethoven, Schubert, and Bruckner, but he also argues that Wagner’s innovations form an indispensable part of Mahler’s style.⁴² The Wagnerian influence may, indeed, prove the most significant of all. Mahler’s intense devotion to Wagner emerges quite clearly out of numerous remarks made in letters and conversations with friends. Stephen McClatchie observes that, as a devotee of Wagnerian ideals, Mahler attempted to bring those innovations into the symphonic medium. More specifically, “the deployment of many of Mahler’s motifs in multiple works suggests a strong musical affinity with Wagner.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion*, 5.

⁴¹ Floros, *Gustav Mahler and the Symphony of the 19th Century*, 147.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴³ Stephen McClatchie, “The Wagnerian Roots of Mahler’s Eighth Symphony,” in *The Total Work of Art: Mahler’s Eighth Symphony in Context* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 2011), 159.

Because of this, discussing features of Wagner's leitmotivic technique will assist in understanding their relevance for Mahler. Despite his large body of theoretical writings, Wagner downplayed the role of leitmotifs in his music dramas by remaining terminologically ambivalent. Thomas Grey suggests, "[t]he term he does use—such as 'melodic moments' or 'elements' (*melodische Momente*), 'orchestral melody,' or simply 'motives'—are either cumbersome or inconsistent, so the word 'leitmotif' fills a terminological need, just as it often proves a practical necessity to attach names to the individual leitmotifs."⁴⁴ At the same time, "leitmotifs in the *Ring* do not have an absolutely fixed identity: it is often difficult to name them accurately, and impossible to make an exact tally, since they tend to shift shape, hence also character and meaning."⁴⁵ Christian Thorau addresses this in his study of the reception of Hans von Wolzogen's leitmotif guides, created in connection with the premiere of the *Ring*. He argues, "[t]he potential structural and metaphorical features a motive presents sensuously (that is, exemplifies) are reduced, selected, and narrowed by the denoting name. Without this fixation the motives are semantically open, floating, referentially flexible, and unstable signs that adapt to the corresponding dramatic context."⁴⁶ Thus, the analyst must walk a tightrope between the convenience, even the necessity, of leitmotif labels and complete semantic fixation.

But how do leitmotifs gain their symbolic associations? Grey provides several answers to this question. Essentially, these associations require "the exposition of a motive in a definitive dramatic context."⁴⁷ That kind of concrete expressive environment may come about either through a specific lexical association (sung words that give reference to the motive's meaning) or

⁴⁴ Thomas S. Grey, "Leitmotif, temporality, and musical design in the *Ring*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Wagner*, ed. Thomas S. Grey, 85-114 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 88.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Christian Thorau, "Guides for Wagnerites: Leitmotifs and Wagnerian Listening," in *Richard Wagner and His World*, ed. Thomas S. Grey, 133-50 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 141.

⁴⁷ Grey, "Leitmotifs, temporality, and musical design in the *Ring*," 88.

through the dramatic action itself. Some motives build toward their “definitive dramatic context” through a series of orchestral anticipations in which the meaning emerges over a period of time rather than instantaneously.⁴⁸ As for leitmotifs attached to specific characters, Grey suggests that they fulfill a sophisticated dramatic purpose beyond merely differentiating between dramatic personas: (1) “the motive acts like a kind of nimbus externalizing the character’s qualities and the effect of his presence on those around him”; (2) the motives “do not represent them as characters as much as they convey gestures or deportment”; and (3) they evolve over the course of the drama in a manner reflective of the characters they represent.⁴⁹ Another important consideration comes from Deryck Cooke, who observes, “‘*Motiv*,’ or ‘motive,’ in the true sense of the word, means the shortest significant thematic idea; but very few of the ideas in *The Ring* are of such brevity . . . Most of them are fully symphonic themes . . . or thematic phrases . . . or chord-sequences . . . or cadences.”⁵⁰ Cooke implores analysts to consider leitmotifs as broader thematic ideas, whose shifting contexts and transformations contribute to the overall dramatic trajectory of the work itself.⁵¹

Mahler’s Approach

Applying these observations, first, any label one might ascribe to the motive that begins the “Alma theme” will, at best, only partially articulate its significance. Additionally, its meaning may change depending on its specific, contextual use. Second, the analysis should begin with the earliest possible instance of a “definitive dramatic context,” one that illuminates the meaning of the motive, whether immediately or as a process of becoming. Finally, as Cooke points out, the

⁴⁸ Grey, “Leitmotifs, temporality, and musical design in the Ring,” 93.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 94, 95.

⁵⁰ Deryck Cooke, *I Saw the World End: A Study of Wagner’s Ring* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 39.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

motive— while semi-autonomous in its occurrences across many works—almost always appears in a broader thematic context. Understanding the function of that theme within a formal/narrative framework will come to bear on its interpretation.

In “Faith in Death: Meaning and Motive in Mahler’s Fifth Symphony,” Allen Gimbel explores the rich leitmotivic universe unifying not only the Fifth, but all of Mahler’s works. He explains:

All of these motives are quotations, either from preexistent works or . . . Mahler’s own works. All of them are in some sense *texted*: that is, their sources contain clearly specifiable content derived by factors such as preexistent usage, literal song text, and historical precedent. . . . This important fact leads naturally to the possibility of deducing “specific extra-musical connotations” provided that a convincing context can be consistently demonstrated.⁵²

If one correctly identifies a particular motive’s source and context, then its repeated use opens a hermeneutic window into possible interpretations. Mahler argues this point in a conversation with Bauer-Lechner, stating:

All communication between the composer and the listener is based on a convention that this or that motif or musical symbol, or whatever one might otherwise call it, functions as an expression of this or that thought or actual intellectual concept. This will be especially obvious to everyone in Wagner. But also Beethoven and more or less every artist has a particular manner of expression for what the artist wants to say which can be comprehended by the public.⁵³

From this statement, one may conclude that Mahler followed the practices of other composers as described by Reynolds. More specifically, he followed Wagner’s example by creating a network of motives spanning multiple works, continuously enriched through repeated use. Along these lines, Almén’s essay, “The Sacrificed Hero: Creative Mythopoesis in Mahler’s *Wunderhorn*

⁵² Allen Gimbel, “Faith in Death: Meaning and Motive in Mahler’s Fifth Symphony,” *Journal of Schenkerian Studies* 3 (2003): 109.

⁵³ Floros, *Gustav Mahler and the Symphony of the Nineteenth Century*, 147. This quote does not appear in Bauer-Lechner’s *Recollections* but in the publication *Der Merker* III (1912), and I have opted to use Floros’ translation here.

Symphonies,” discusses the ways in which “Mahler—and those of us who encounter his music—are engaging in what myth scholars call *creative mythopoesis*, forming new myths from old to introduce different ways of confronting reality.”⁵⁴ Almén directly echoes the thoughts of Ricoeur when he states, “[i]f narrative procedures indeed govern these works, such procedures are inseparable from the symbolic network in a manner exceeded by no other symphonist’s output.”⁵⁵ Recalling the schema of three-fold mimesis, Almén’s description conforms to the shift from mimesis₁ to mimesis₂—the composer’s worldview consisting of received narratives and symbols combined with experience, which becomes encoded in the musical work—and, subsequently, mimesis₂ to mimesis₃—the work’s realization through encounters with the worldviews of its audience.

Almén warns against fixing programmatic meanings onto such symbols, preferring instead the associative meanings that emerge from one’s encounter with the music. His investigation unfolds in four phases: (1) “the semantic space of Mahler’s symbols is opened out to include historically antecedent meanings”; (2) “the symbolic meanings are coordinated with respect to a clearly observable cyclic organizational scheme . . . illustrated via a critically influential treatment of cyclic imagery by the literary critic Northrop Frye. Frye’s (1957) cycle of four mythic archetypes, or *mythoi*, are distinguished by the use of certain constellations of imagery and by particular dramatic trajectories”; (3) regarding the *Wunderhorn* Symphonies, Almén suggests “a sociological analysis of Mahler’s hero as a scapegoat for cultural transgression”; and (4) “a partial narrative analysis coordinates symbolic material with formal and thematic process in individual movements.”⁵⁶ Therefore, following Gimbel and Almén, one

⁵⁴ Almén, “The Sacrificed Hero,” 135.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 136, 137.

may investigate Mahler's use of symbols as both a network of leitmotifs within the text and as connected to mythic, or perhaps more accurately, worldview associations outside of the text.

Both approaches will form an integral part of the investigation moving forward.

Motive as Gesture

Returning to the concept of musical gesture, introduced in the previous chapter, how do the components of this motive evoke, in Monahan's terms, "real-world actions?" Answering this question involves a consideration of the first five notes of the "Alma theme" (refer to Example 3.1) and how its components (x , y , and z) contribute to the overall expressive effect. Component x , as a rising three-note motion, possesses a wide variability among examples of the motive. Rhythmically, x 's three notes usually conform to the same duration, but this does not always apply. A longer first note with shorter notes that follow frequently occurs. The common thread between the examples of x consists of the build-up of energy through its resistance to the artificial gravity of the tonal framework, which sets up the slingshot of y . In terms of pitch, the three notes of x may relate to each other as sequential whole-steps, chromatically, or in some combination of the two. Likewise, component y possesses a high degree of variability both rhythmically (long or short durations) and in terms of pitch (the intervallic relationship to the last note of x). In every case, y forms the point of maximum tension after the built-up energy of x and before z 's resolution. Component z presents fewer variants, either resolving downward by step or half-step (with a few notable exceptions that resolve upward by half-step). As such, it relates to the well-established notion of a *sighing* gesture, and in this context, z tends to communicate a feeling of satisfaction (either achieved or desired). Thus, the entire gesture, as an aggregate of smaller motions, represents both aspiration and fulfillment in a single, fluid motion. Even

without additional contextual clues or symbolic associations, the gestural significance of this motive already suggests its expressive potential. By extension, the motive also functions as a musical agent, which proves relevant to the discussion of the “Alma theme” and its role in the first movement of the Sixth.

To summarize, the investigation of this motive involves several theoretical and analytical elements: (1) understanding that the means of employing musical symbols (like all other symbols) emerge from cultural practices (i.e. leitmotifs and/or private associations); (2) a discovery of how the musical text produces those symbols; (3) an articulation of its role within the musical narrative; (4) an interpretation of its significance on multiple levels (as in Frye’s model); and (5) connecting these associations to worldview presuppositions.

THE *EWIGKEIT* MOTIVE

Scholarly Studies

Although several scholars discuss this recurring five-note motive in Mahler’s works, relatively few in-depth studies exist to clarify its origin and function. Perhaps the first and best-known effort comes from Barford’s article, “Mahler: A Thematic Archetype.” In this study, he attempts to identify the motive’s characteristics, note its appearances throughout Mahler’s *oeuvre*, and indicate its possible meaning: “[p]ermeating a great deal of Mahler’s music there is a pentatonic archetype, the constant reiteration of which bestows a characteristic affective tone and a fundamental pattern of melodic structure upon many of his important works.”⁵⁷ Of course, the “pentatonic archetype” he describes refers to the first five notes of the “Alma theme.” This basic

⁵⁷ Barford, “Mahler: A Thematic Archetype,” 297.

pattern occurs with incredible frequency. To explain its frequent use, Barford wonders if it served as “an unconscious *idée fixe*, or whether Mahler consciously adopted it for almost universal use because it seemed to crystallize a kind of religious longing,” “boundless aspiration,” “and the element of resignation.”⁵⁸ Without drawing a definitive conclusion, he recognizes a certain continuity among the contexts in which it appears in the form of a distinctly “religious” or “mystical” context. Barford argues, “[a]ny conclusions we draw from this mass of evidence must remain speculative. There is no occasion for dogmatism.”⁵⁹ While laying the groundwork for later scholars, Barford’s discussion still leaves a number of questions unanswered, including the motive’s origin.

Floros attempts to answer this question by tracing the motive back to Wagner. He argues that Mahler’s uses the motive as an allusion to the final act of *Siegfried* (and, consequently, the music of the *Siegfried Idyll*) where Brünnhilde sings of her eternal nature to Siegfried after waking from the “magic sleep.”⁶⁰

Example 3.7: Wagner—*Siegfried*, Act III, Scene 3



Referring back to Example 3.1, the melodic idea from *Siegfried* contains the three elements that make up Mahler’s five-note motive. Specifically, the second “*Ewig*” comprises three rising notes

⁵⁸ Barford, “Mahler: A Thematic Archetype,” 298.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 306.

⁶⁰ Floros, *Gustav Mahler and the Symphony of the 19th Century*, 201.

(x), the leap upward to the word “*bin*” (y), and the downward resolution by step (z). The accompanying text may help provide an interpretation of this melodic idea:

Ewig war ich,	I was forever,
ewig bin ich,	forever I am,
ewig in süß	forever in sweet
Sehnender Wonne, -	yearning delight -
doch ewig zu deinem Heil!	But to you eternal salvation! ⁶¹

Based on this text, Floros coins the name adopted by many other scholars: the *Ewigkeit* motive. Additionally, he notes that it frequently occurs in contexts that invoke the concept of eternity. He points to the Second Symphony, with its narrative of death and resurrection, as an obvious parallel. Floros also observes, “[t]he same theme is met—in metamorphoses—at the end of the slow movement of the Fourth Symphony . . . and at that point in the second part of the Eighth Symphony which precedes the *chorus mysticus* . . . Again, it has the meaning of a symbol of eternity.”⁶²

James L. Zychowicz forwards an alternative explanation for the *Ewigkeit* motive’s origin in his discussion of Mahler’s Second Symphony. He posits that Mahler took the motive from Hans Rott’s Symphony in E minor. Several primary sources indicate a close relationship with Rott. In a letter to Emil Freund from 1880, Mahler expresses his distress over Rott’s deteriorating mental condition: “[i]n return your upsetting news, I am afraid I have equally upsetting news for you. My friend Hans Rott has become *insane!*”⁶³ Rott would later die in 1884, but even in a conversation with Bauer-Lechner in 1900, Rott still occupied Mahler’s thoughts:

⁶¹ Floros, *Gustav Mahler and the Symphony of the 19th Century*, 201.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 202. The connection to *Siegfried* presents a problem of definition. In this chapter, I defined the *Ewigkeit* motive with components *x*, *y*, and *z*, which does not include the falling fifth found at the beginning of the example. One can also find examples of the *Ewigkeit* motive that include this falling gesture (the interval may vary). It appears that Mahler appropriated this melody both as a whole and as separable parts. However, this chapter will only take into account examples that utilize *x*, *y*, and *z*, regardless of the presence or absence of a falling gesture preceding them.

⁶³ Marter, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 64.

What music has lost in him is immeasurable. His First Symphony, written when he was a young man of twenty, already soars to such heights of genius that it makes him—without exaggeration—the founder of the New Symphony as I understand it. It is true that he has not yet fully realized his aims here. It is like someone taking a run for the longest possible throw and not quite hitting the mark. But I know what he is driving at. His innermost nature is so much akin to mine that he and I are like two fruits from the same tree, produced by the same soil, nourished by the same air.⁶⁴

Zychowicz believes Mahler's use of the *Ewigkeit* motive in the Second Symphony could represent an homage to Rott, and the third movement of Rott's Symphony includes melodic ideas similar to *Ewigkeit* motive as featured in the Second Symphony. This does not necessarily contradict Floros, since, as Zychowicz argues, Rott also drew inspiration from Wagner's *Siegfried*.⁶⁵ Although one can certainly recognize similarities, Rott's Scherzo does not include a motivic idea that contains all three *Ewigkeit* elements. At most, its main thematic material and contrasting Trio feature themes that utilize components *x* and *y*, but not *z*.⁶⁶ Zychowicz does point out, however, several obvious similarities between Rott's Symphony in E minor and Mahler's Second. Whether Mahler's *Ewigkeit* motive stems from Wagner or from Rott remains unclear, but since either path traces back to the same music, the motive could still carry associations from its original context. While Zychowicz pursues ways in which the connection to Rott comes to bear on the meaning of the Second, this does not necessarily conflict with Floros's interpretation of the motive's expressive content.

Of course, given the motive's simplicity and flexibility, one could point to other potential sources. Another Wagnerian explanation comes from *Die Meistersinger*, an opera Mahler

⁶⁴ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 146.

⁶⁵ James L. Zychowicz, "Gustav Mahler's Motives and Motivation in His 'Resurrection' Symphony: The Apotheosis of Hans Rott," in *For the Love of Music: Festschrift in Honor of Theodore Front on his 90th Birthday*, ed. Darwin F. Scott (Luca: Antique, 2002), 156; the melodic idea in question occurs specifically in mm. 195-201 in Rott's Scherzo.

⁶⁶ Hans Rott, 1878, "1. Symphonie.: Zweiter bis vierter Satz," Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, accessed March 23, 2019, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rep/10036A8B>.

conducted numerous times and greatly admired. A theme that first appears in the opening Prelude, which later forms part of the “Prize Song,” contains a two-fold *Ewigkeit*-like gesture.

Example 3.8: Wagner—*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Prelude to Act I



Ernest Newman interprets the melody as representing Walter’s expression of love for Eva, which certainly corresponds to Mahler’s use of the motive in the context of the Fifth Symphony.⁶⁷ One might also point to the fact that it occurs in the context of a creative act: the composition/improvisation of a *Meisterlied*. Given its generic arch contour, however, one could probably point to numerous potential examples of this gestural shape in tonal music. A definitive answer remains elusive, but the motive’s origin in a work that Mahler admired (whether of Wagner, Rott, or some other source) reveals that it held personal significance for him. Regardless of its precise origin, the associations it acquires through use in Mahler’s symphonies makes the motive its own, distinctively Mahlerian, entity. I will retain the use of the name “*Ewigkeit*,” not only for the sake of convenience. One frequently finds it in expressive contexts either directly referencing eternity or other related concepts.

⁶⁷ Ernest Newman, *The Wagner Operas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 294; see my concluding interpretation of Part III in the previous chapter.

Investigative Considerations

Before beginning an exploration of the motive's appearances, it will help to summarize Floros's three approaches to interpreting symbols in Mahler's works, which this investigation will utilize where applicable: (1) "[t]he first is by investigating his vocal works . . . Since some of these symbols reappear in purely instrument symphony movements, it is possible to identify them"; (2) "[a] second possibility is undertaking an investigation of Mahler's programmatic statements with respect to individual symphonies. In several instances Mahler himself drew attention to the symbolic significance of certain musical conventions or processes"; and (3) "[t]he third . . . way is based on the observation that many themes of Wagner, Liszt and Richard Strauss whose semantics are known or can be reconstructed also appear in Mahler's symphonies in the same or similar form."⁶⁸ Obviously, the search for the origins of the motive already involved this third approach, but the other methods will assist in determining the motive's significance.

Approaching the motive's use chronologically will demonstrate its continued growth and enrichment over time. First, the initial use of the motive must be determined. While one could argue that it occurs in Mahler's earlier works (such as the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* or the First Symphony), I begin with the Second Symphony for a number of reasons: (1) the early instances lack the same degree of salience or prominence as the examples from the Second—they do not stand out as significant; (2) these appearances tend to occur as isolated examples rather than as part of a larger network of recurring thematic ideas; and (3) no recognizable interpretive purpose exists for this motive before the Second Symphony, a fact that stands in sharp contrast to its deliberate and consistent use from that work onward.

⁶⁸ Floros, *Gustav Mahler and the Symphony of the 19th Century*, 153-54.

The *Ewigkeit* Motive in the *Wunderhorn* Symphonies

Any discussion of the *Wunderhorn* Symphonies must grapple with the programmatic statements that Mahler attached to them. What weight should one give these comments for a hermeneutical investigation of these works? While Mahler clearly tried to distance himself from the type of programmatic description employed by Richard Strauss, William J. McGrath observes:

Even though Mahler rejects the idea of a program as the central point of a composition, he does allow it a secondary descriptive role, a view which reflects his more specific ideas on the relationship of world and tone. Mahler felt the full range of man's being should be expressed in music, and even though the words dictated the subject of the music in any vocal composition, it was still the music itself that conveyed the ultimate meaning. Thus a program could be taken as a partial guide to the whole; it was not incidental or inaccurate, but simply incomplete.⁶⁹

This seems the most sensible approach to Mahler's programs, falling neither at the extremes of total embrace or complete abandonment. Kangas nuances this idea further when he suggests, "[i]nstead of reading the symphony in terms of the program, which has the effect of allowing the program to frame the interpretation but also the control its details, I propose unfolding a single world in front of both texts."⁷⁰ In other words, both the work and its program open up a broader level of signification worth exploring. With this in mind, I will begin by making the case that the *Ewigkeit* motive derives its meaning from the contexts of its appearances, which will be elucidated further, after the fact, from the programs themselves in order to unfold the world of signification opened by this motive.

⁶⁹ William J. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 126.

⁷⁰ Kangas, "Remembering Mahler," 14.

Symphony No. 2

The *Ewigkeit* motive occurs several times during the first movement in connection with both the exposition's primary and secondary themes. Similar to the Sixth, the Second begins with a minor-mode march. Even if one did not know that Mahler once called this movement "*Todtenfeier*" ("Funeral Rites"), the topical hallmarks of the minor mode, dotted rhythms, and fanfares readily communicate this. In the build-up to the first climax of the movement—a PAC in C minor (m. 41)—the *Ewigkeit* motive first appears subtly, but after the brief transition, it emerges more prominently as part of the secondary theme in an unstable E major (root position tonic never occurs). The topical environment evokes the *pastoral* with a simple, lyrical melodic line, static harmony, and accompanimental horn-fifths.

Example 3.9: Symphony No. 2/I, mm. 48-50

VI. 1.

pp

Ewigkeit

Subsequent manifestations play out as one might expect, retaining the topical polarity from the exposition. The *Ewigkeit* motive, in both primary- and secondary-theme guises, returns in the development (mm. 208-10 and mm. 307-90) and recapitulation (mm. 346-50 and mm. 362-64), neither version, positive or negative, prevailing over the other. As Monahan points out, however, the secondary theme doubly fails in the recapitulation by appearing in the wrong key (E major, m. 362) and failing to achieve an ESC. Thus, “as the light of E major fades (m. 388), the failed

S-reprise quickly yields to the bleak C-minor of the closing and coda zones. As anticipated, structural failure points the way to expressive failure.”⁷¹

The second and third movements offer few iterations of the *Ewigkeit* motive, save for fleeting examples.⁷² But the fourth and fifth movements provide a definitive and foundational associations (the “definitive dramatic context” referred to earlier), which the *Ewigkeit* motive will retain in subsequent works. As Gimbel argues, the most important recurring motives in Mahler’s music come into being in precise expressive contexts—they are “texted.” In this particular case, the vocal resources provide the motive with a poetic specificity it lacked in the previous movements. The fourth movement’s text, drawn from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, reveals the connection to the label *Ewigkeit* quite clearly:

O Röschen rot!
Der Mensch liegt in größter Not!
Der Mensch liegt in größter peim!
Je lieber möcht’ ich im Himmel sein,
je lieber möcht’ ich im Himmel sein!

O little red rose!
Man lies in greatest need!
Man lies in greatest pain!
Even more would I rather be in heaven,
Even more would I rather be in heaven!

Da kam ich auf einem breiten Weg;
da kam ein Engelein und wollt’ mich abweisen.

There I came upon a broad path;
There came an angel and wanted to turn me
away.

Ach nein! Ich ließ mich nicht abweisen!
Ach nein! Ich ließ mich nicht abweisen!
Ich bin von Gott und will wieder zu Gott!
Der liebe Gott,
der liebe Gott wird mir ein Lichten geben,
wird leuchten mir bis in das ewig selig Leben!

Ah no, I would not be turned away!
Ah no, I would not be turned away!
I am from God and want to return to God!
The loving God,
the loving God will give me a little light,
will illuminate me into eternal blessed life!⁷³

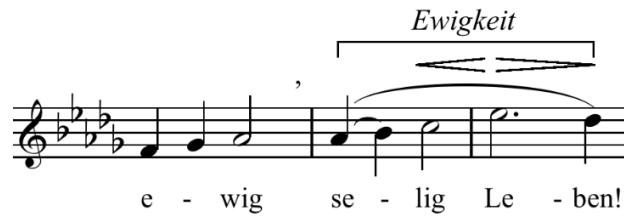
The final line of the poem, aspiring toward the transcendent, directly coincides with the *Ewigkeit* motive, now taking on a more salient and significant status.

⁷¹ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 25.

⁷² See movement II, m. 70 and m. 160 in the clarinet and bassoon parts, and movement III, mm. 35-36 in the violins.

⁷³ Gustav Mahler, *Symphony No. 2*, Neue Kritische Gesamtausgabe, vol. 1: Partitur, ed. Renate Stark-Voit and Gilbert Kaplan (Vienna: Universal Edition, 2010), 279.

Example 3.10: Symphony No. 2/IV, mm. 63-65



The final movement begins in the manner of the finale of Beethoven’s Ninth with a dissonant cry, but after the tumult dies down, the *Ewigkeit* motive announces itself on the horns, opening the possibility of redemption from the tragic narrative initiated by the first movement.

Example 3.11: Symphony No. 2/V, mm. 32-33



Confirmation of this redemption arrives near the movement’s end when the chorus, silent until now, intones a poem of Friedrich Klopstock:

Aufersteh’n, ja aufersteh’n wirst du,
 mein Staub, nach kurzer Ruh!
 Unsterblich Leben! Unsterblich Leben
 Wird, der dich rief, dir geben!

Rise again, yes, thou shalt rise again,
 My dust, after short rest!
 Immortal life!
 He who called thee will grant thee.

Wieder aufzublüh’n, wirst du gesä’t!
 Der Herr der Ernte geht
 und sammelt Garben
 uns ein, die starben!

To bloom again art thou sown!
 The Lord of the Harvest goes
 And gathers in, like sheaves,
 Us who died.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Mahler, *Symphony No. 2*, vol. 1: “Partitur,” 279.

After these stanzas, an instrumental interlude sounds the *Ewigkeit* motive, and from here to the end, it appears with increasing frequency. After the interlude, Mahler supplies his own poetry, beginning with the soloists and then, later, the chorus, utilizing the *Ewigkeit* motive to communicate his message. The following excerpt of the text corresponds with the build-up to the work’s apotheosis:

Mit Flügeln, die ich mir errungen,
in heißen Liebestreben
werd’ ich entschweben
zum Licht, zu dem kein Aug’ gedrungen!

With wings which I have won,
In love’s fierce striving,
I shall soar upwards
To the light which no eye has soared.

Mit Flügeln, die ich mir errungen,
werde ich entschweben!
Sterben werd’ ich, um zu leben!

With wings which I have won,
I shall soar upwards
I shall die, [in order] to live!⁷⁵

This last line, sung by the chorus in unison, reveals the *telos* toward which the *Ewigkeit* motive has led throughout the symphony.

Example 3.12: Symphony No. 2/V, mm. 696-701

The image shows a musical staff in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody begins with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter). The lyrics 'Ster - ben werd' ich, um zu le - ben!' are written below the staff. A bracket labeled 'Ewigkeit' spans from the first G4 to the final C4.

During the final stanza of poetry—a reiterated cry of “aufersteh’n!”—the *Ewigkeit* motive sounds several times in succession, solidifying its meaning as a symbol of eternity, spiritual fulfillment, and immortality.

While coherent on its own contextual terms, the programmatic explanations Mahler provides corroborate and deepen this interpretation of the motive’s significance. In describing

⁷⁵ Mahler, *Symphony No. 2*, vol. 1, 280.

the work to Marschall, Mahler clarifies that first movement's title of "*Todtenfeier*" refers to "the hero of my D major symphony [the First] who is being borne to his grave."⁷⁶ On another occasion, Mahler elaborated that "[w]e stand by the coffin of a well-loved person. His life, struggles, passions and aspirations once more, for the last time, pass before our mind's eye."⁷⁷ Applying this to the P and S polarity, one can infer that P expresses the death of the hero Mahler describes, while S represents happier recollections of the hero, specifically those related to Nature, and the hope for redemption. The second and third movements, according to Mahler, function primarily as interludes before the narrative resumes in the fourth and fifth movements. Although he said very little about "*Urlicht*" (movement IV), preferring to let the poetry speak for itself, he later explained to Bauer-Lechner, "[t]he 'Urlicht' represents the soul's striving and questioning attitude towards God and its own immortality."⁷⁸ Regarding the Finale, Mahler declares, "[a]nd now the resolution of the terrible problem of life—redemption."⁷⁹ As discussed, the movement utilizes the *Ewigkeit* motive as the symbol of that redemption in connection with the texts by Klopstock and Mahler. The *Ewigkeit* motive represents eternal life (both the search for it and its fulfillment); it forms a part of the movement toward redemption (*Erlösung*); other associations include Nature (the first movement's secondary theme), light (*Urlicht*), and love (Mahler's text: "With wings which I have won, / In love's fierce striving"); and it creates motivic/thematic unity across the movements of the symphony. Thus, the Second provides an interpretive foundation for the motive's use in later works.

⁷⁶ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 180.

⁷⁷ Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1975), 162.

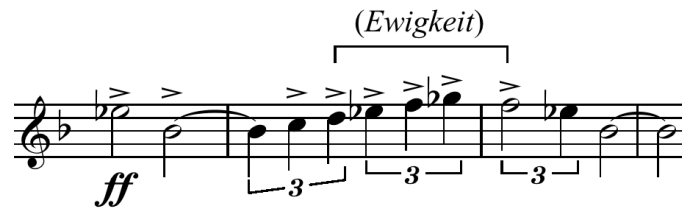
⁷⁸ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 44.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Symphony No. 3

The *Ewigkeit* motive plays an important role in the Third Symphony, and as in the Second, this includes occurrences within a poetic context—both symphonies serve as examples of what Floros called Mahler’s “Symphonic Cantata” style.⁸⁰ Also like the Second, the Third contains early examples of the motive that anticipate its participation in the ultimate resolution of the narrative. By calling attention to several significant manifestations in the Third—before consulting Mahler’s programmatic statements or descriptive titles—the contextual meaning of the motive will emerge just as it did in the Second. An important difference in this work comes with the motive’s gradual evolution from a proto-*Ewigkeit* motive to more typical examples (similar to Wagner’s technique as previously discussed). Culled from sub-motivic material in the symphony’s opening *funeral march*, a trumpet announces a variant of the motive:

Example 3.13: Symphony No. 3/I, mm. 87-89



Only a few measures later, a more typical manifestation occurs (mm. 98-99, still a variant of the normal *x*, *y*, and *z* paradigm). While these examples both come from the D-minor *funeral march*, a positive example occurs in the D-major exposition (mm. 276-78 in the first violins). Despite this opposition between negative and positive polarities, the conflict does not take place with the same level of urgency found in the Second.

⁸⁰ Floros, *Gustav Mahler and the Symphony of the 19th Century*, 19.

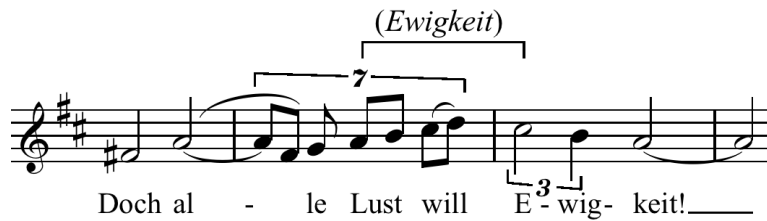
The *Ewigkeit* motive plays a much more substantial role in the middle movements as compared with the Second Symphony. It crops up throughout the entirety of the work in various guises, and in the second movement—a *pastoral* minuet—a similar variant to one found in measures 98-99 of 3/I appears at several points (see first violins, mm. 27-29). The third movement, a rondo-form Scherzo, includes several examples, but virtually all of them pertain to the episodes for solo post horn (see mm. 292-94, for example). Most significantly, the *Ewigkeit* motive appears in conjunction with a poetic text in the fourth movement. This provides substantial evidence that Mahler utilized the motive for similar expressive purposes to those of the Second Symphony. The fourth movement sets the “Midnight Song” from Nietzsche’s *Also sprach Zarathustra* for alto solo. Although substantially different from the aesthetic of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*—both in style and tone—Nietzsche’s poem shares many thematic elements with *Urlicht*:

O Mensch! Gib Acht!	O man! Attend!
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?	What says the deep midnight?
Ich schlief!	I slept!
Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht!	From a deep dream have I awoken!
Die Welt ist tief!	The world is deep!
Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht!	And deeper than the day has imagined!
O Mensch! Tief, tief ist ihr Weh!	O man! Deep, deep is its suffering!
Lust tiefer noch als Herzeleid!	Joy deeper still than heart’s sorrow!
Weh spricht: Vergeh!	Suffering speaks: Perish!
Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit!	But all joy desires eternity!
Will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit.	Desires deep, deep eternity! ⁸¹

Both poems contrast suffering and eternity, and in both settings, Mahler makes use of the *Ewigkeit* motive. The variant seen from the first movement (Example 3.14) returns several times (see the violins in mm. 57-59), which the alto soloist intones while singing “*Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit!* (“But all joy desires eternity!”).

⁸¹ Gustav Mahler, *Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4 in Full Score* (New York: Dover, 1989), viii.

Example 3.14: Symphony No. 3/IV, mm. 119-22



Following this declaration, the horns present the motive in a more familiar form:

Example 3.15: Symphony No. 3/IV, mm. 126-29

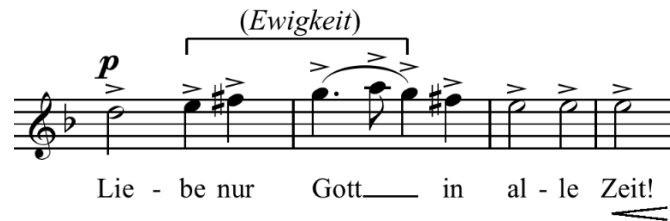


One may notice a striking resemblance between this example and another from the Finale of the Second (Example 3.13). Despite the rhythmic displacement in Example 3.18, both moments share a similar gestural shape. Whether or not Mahler deliberately made this connection, the two passages express a desire for the eternal. The fifth movement acts as a continuation and response to the fourth. It includes boy's and women's choruses, representing angelic voices, and the return of the alto solo, a human voice expressing grief over her transgressions ("I have trespassed against the ten commandments / I go and weep bitterly").⁸² Once again, the appearances of the *Ewigkeit* motive correspond to the variant first seen in Example 3.13 (in that *y* consists of a step

⁸² Mahler, *Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4 in Full Score*, viii; "Ich hab' überreten die zehn Gebot. / Ich gehe und weine ja bitterlich."

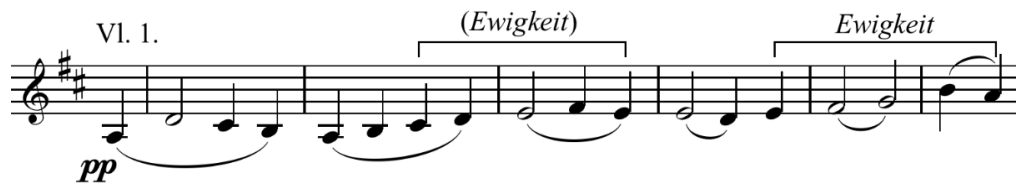
rather than a leap upward). A significant example occurs when, in response to the soloist's confession, the angels respond: "Only love God forever! / Thus will you attain heavenly joy."⁸³

Example 3.16: Symphony No. 3/V, mm. 86-89

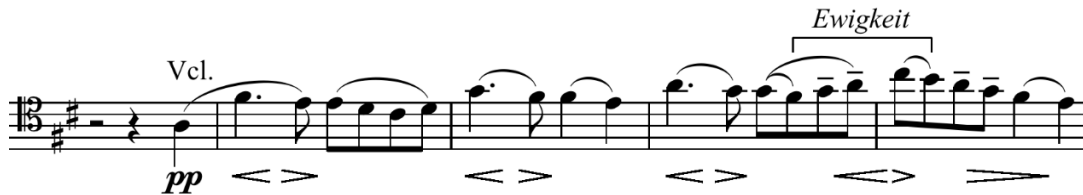


In the final adagio, the *Ewigkeit* motive forms is grafted into the movement's main thematic complex, becoming embedded within its melodic ideas.

Example 3.17: Symphony No. 3/VI, mm. 1-6



Example 3.18: Symphony No. 3/VI, mm. 8-12



⁸³ Mahler, *Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4 in Full Score*, viii; "Liebe nur Gott in alle Zeit! / So wirst du erlangen die himmlische Freud'."

The first of these examples, derived from the first thematic period, evokes a *hymn* topic.⁸⁴ The second example, which immediately follows the first, presents a more lyrical melody, a song-without-words. While threats to the stability of the D-major *hymn* come in the form of quotations from the first and fourth movements, stability prevails with a brass *chorale* that begins in measure 252, increasing in expressive and dynamic intensity until the end of the movement. This topical/expressive discourse, as one might expect, includes several statements of the *Ewigkeit* motive (see mm. 296-99 in the trumpets), which, once again, forms an integral part of the transcendent conclusion of this gigantic symphonic narrative.

Thus, before consulting the considerable programmatic documents related to the Third Symphony, one can easily comprehend that the *Ewigkeit* motive retains its expressive function from the Second Symphony. While perhaps not as foregrounded, the Third's use of this symbol also embodies the entire narrative, from the funereal to the transcendent. In fact, even without the movement titles one can discern the Symphony's gradual ascent toward its conclusion, from the base complexities of the musical elements in the first movement to the divine simplicity of the Finale. This general interpretation finds corroborative support as well when considering the movement titles Mahler created. During various stages of the compositional process, Mahler sketched several drafts of the order and titles of the Third's movements, eventually arriving at the version he shared with Bauer-Lechner in the in the summer of 1895:

1. Summer marches in.
2. What the flowers of the meadow tell me.
3. What the animals of the forest tell me.
4. What night tells me (Man).
5. What the morning bells tell me (the Angels).
6. What love tells me.
7. What the child tells me.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ The authenticity of the *Ewigkeit* label for the motive in parentheses is debatable. While it contains the basic elements in a variant of its prototypical form, it may merely resemble the *Ewigkeit* motive due to its arch-like contour. Regardless, the second appearance in Example 3.20 provides a less ambiguous example.

⁸⁵ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 41.

Mahler eventually dropped the seventh movement, which became the Finale of the Fourth Symphony, but the program otherwise remained intact during the Third's composition. Floros explains, "[a]t the conception of his Third Symphony, Mahler allowed himself to be inspired by the idea of a tiered arrangement of creation (plant world, animal world, human world, and angel world) and also by the idea that love is the highest level from which one can contemplate the world."⁸⁶

A closer examination of Mahler's program extends the implicit associations of the *Ewigkeit* motive, putting an even greater emphasis on its relationship to the concepts of Nature and Love.⁸⁷ Mahler's explanation of the first movement's *funeral march*, applied to Examples 3.14 and 3.15, coheres with the use of the motive within the primary theme of the Second's first movement:

It has almost ceased to be music; it is hardly anything but the sound of nature. It's eerie, the way life gradually breaks through, out of soulless, petrified matter. . . . Once again, an atmosphere of brooding summer midday heat hangs over the introduction to this movement; not a breath stirs, all life is suspended, and the sun-drenched air trembles and vibrates. At intervals there come the moans of the youth, of captive life struggling for release [*Erlösung*] from the clutches of lifeless, rigid Nature.⁸⁸

In this context, Mahler's use of the motive suggests the struggle for "release" (one could also render *Erlösung* as "salvation" or "redemption") that he described. Mahler explains the second movement ("What the flowers in the meadow tell me") in a similar manner: "[a] stormy wind blows across the meadow and shakes the leaves and blossoms, which groan and whimper on

⁸⁶ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 88.

⁸⁷ I prefer to capitalize these words, particularly "Love" to differentiate between these concepts in the ordinary sense and the metaphysical/religious sense.

⁸⁸ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 59. For the original wording, see Hebert Killian, ed., *Gustav Mahler in den Erinnerungen von Natalie Bauer-Lechner*, rev. ed. (Hamburg: Karl Dieter Wagner, 1984), 56.

their stems, as if imploring release [*Erlösung*] into a higher realm.”⁸⁹ Although the *Ewigkeit* motive does not appear in the quick-tempo sections to which this remark pertains, the characterization of flowers as pleading for redemption corresponds to established associations of the motive. The third and fourth movements, likewise, continue with examples in which the motive relates to pleas for redemption, both animal and human. But the Finale, as the highest level of Being, culminates this upward movement. In a letter to Hermann Behn, Mahler clarifies that the title of this movement refers “not [to] *earthly* but *eternal* love.”⁹⁰ Furthermore, he identifies this eternal Love with God. As Mahler explains to Anna von Mildenburg: “[i]t is an attempt to show the summit, the highest level from which the world can be surveyed. I could equally well call the movement something like: ‘What God tells me!’ And this in the sense that God can, after all, only be comprehended as ‘love.’”⁹¹

Symphony No. 4

When he came to compose his next work, Mahler scaled back from the large musical structures of the Second and Third. This applies not only to the Fourth Symphony’s short duration and comparatively modest orchestration, it also applies to the extent to which he utilizes the *Ewigkeit* motive. Nearly all of its appearances occur in the third movement, with a few examples in the first and last movements. It does not play any obvious role in the Scherzo. Significantly, composition of the Fourth corresponds with a turning point in Mahler’s relationship to programs. Floros explains, “[i]n October 1900, shortly before the completion of the Fourth, Mahler did something that amounted to a denial of his symphonic work thus far by

⁸⁹ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 52. For the original wording, see Killian, *Gustav Mahler in den Erinnerungen von Natalie Bauer-Lechner*, 49.

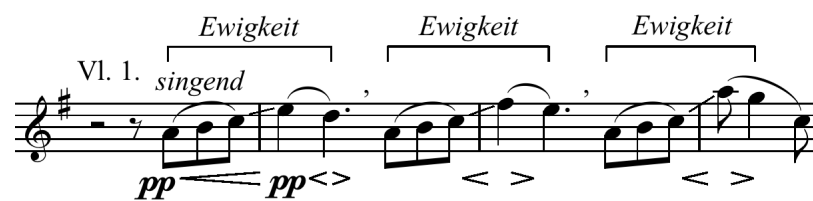
⁹⁰ Herta Blaukopf, ed., *Mahler’s Unknown Letters*, trans. Richard Stokes (London: Victor Gollancz, 1986), 26.

⁹¹ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 188.

making a public statement in Munich against program music.”⁹² Still, clues exist that point to the work’s meaning. The symphony ends with a *Wunderhorn* song, “Das Himmlische Leben,” the text of which describes a child’s vision of heaven. Since Mahler originally intended to use this song as the last movement of the Third, it predates the other movements of the Fourth by several years. Consequently, Mahler wrote the preceding three movements in light of this final song.

The third movement plays an important role in moving toward the symphony’s final destination. Here, the *Ewigkeit* motive abounds.

Example 3.19: Symphony No. 4/III, mm. 66-69

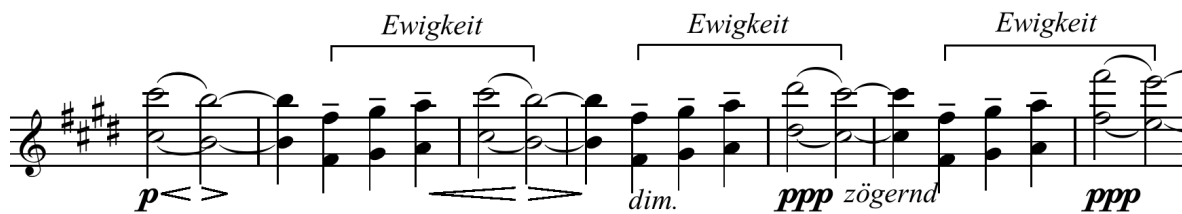


This moment and others like it seem to signify aspiration toward the transcendent or, more specifically, a yearning for eternal life (given the content of the final movement). It does not suggest an immediate fulfillment of this aspiration. In fact, the above example comes after the shift from the opening key of G major into A minor (m. 62), and it appears not long before a negative *collapse*-like gesture in measures 89-91. As part of a double-variation form, this process repeats itself later even more climactically. The *Ewigkeit* motive, striving for redemption, suffers an even more devastating collapse at measure 210. Despite this, the main theme returns again in G major, going through an even more rapid series of transformations, which spiral out of control and cut off at measure 283. The serene passage that follows—including iterations of the *Ewigkeit*

⁹² Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 112.

motive in measures 291-92 and 302-3—sets the stage for a moment of *Durchbruch*. At measure 315, a burst of sound suddenly occurs in E major (the key of the Finale), and the horns play a melodic idea taken from “Das Himmlische Leben’s” main theme. The most significant appearance of the *Ewigkeit* motive occurs here. As the loud eruption dies away, the motive appears one again before the end of the movement.

Example 3.20: Symphony No. 4/III, mm. 326-32



Even without programmatic explanation, the reference could not be clearer. In this moment of breakthrough, the heaven sought and suffered for finally arrives.

Mahler’s private statements about the Fourth corroborate this interpretation and enrich the *Ewigkeit* motive’s range of signification. Concerning the third movement, Bauer-Lechner relates, “his mother’s face, recalled from childhood, had hovered before his mind’s eye: sad and yet laughing, as if through tears. For she, too, had suffered endlessly, but had always resolved everything in love and forgiveness.”⁹³ As in the Third, suffering gives way to love, and Mahler layers associations of maternity (specifically his own mother) and childhood into the meaning of the motive. Given the heavenly imagery of “Das himmlische Leben,” one may find it surprising that the final song only contains one direct reference to the *Ewigkeit* motive, but Bauer-Lechner

⁹³ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 152-53.

provides a detail that endows this singular occurrence with great expressive weight. According to her recollection, Mahler initially titled the third movement “The Smiling of St. Ursula.”⁹⁴ According to Catholic tradition, St. Ursula suffered and died along with her handmaidens as a martyr. Therefore, the third movement—in an emotional rather than literal sense—refers to deliverance from suffering through death and the passage into eternity. The text of “Das himmlische Leben” (and Mahler’s setting) illuminates this connection in its final stanza.

Kein Musik ist ja nicht auf Erden,
die uns’rer verglichen kann werden.
Elf tausend Jungfrauen zu tanzen sich trauen!
Sanct Ursula selbst dazu lacht!

There is truly no music on earth
With which ours can be compared.
Eleven thousand maidens venture to dance!
Saint Ursula herself laughs to see it!⁹⁵

Example 3.21: Symphony No. 4/IV, mm. 150-53



The suffering of St. Ursula completely fades away in the context of heaven, and the aspiration toward and fulfillment of redemption finds expression in the *Ewigkeit* motive. Taken as a whole, the *Wunderhorn* symphonies utilize this motive with expressive consistency. Simultaneously, it comes to take on new and increasingly rich associations from work to work: eternal life, redemption, illumination, Love, Nature, maternity, and childlike bliss.

⁹⁴ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 152.

⁹⁵ Mahler, *Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4 in Full Score*, vii.

The *Ewigkeit* Motive in the Middle Period

Symphony No. 5: Parts I and II

As the previous case study demonstrated, Mahler's life dramatically changed after the completion of the Fourth Symphony. Musically, he characterized this shift as a turn toward "a completely new style," which began in the summer of 1901. It stands to reason that this transformation would apply to the *Ewigkeit* motive, and the conclusions of Chapter 2 indicate this did indeed occur. But the initial uses of the motive in Parts I and II of the Fifth continue its typical expressive function. From the narrative analysis of the Fifth, I argued that Part I represents the tragic past. The *Ewigkeit* motive's redemptive potential first emerges in the contrasting Trio I, which shifts the level of the musical discourse in a reaction against the tragic *Trauermarsch*. In the context of the chaotic Trio, the brief tonicization of G-flat major corresponds to the first appearance of the *Ewigkeit* motive (see Example 2.3). Similar to Wagner, Mahler does not introduce this motive in its definitive form. Rather, the motive evolves throughout the course of the Trio sections, culminating in a dramatic statement during the climactic build-up just before the movement's coda (see Example 2.4).

In the sonata-allegro movement that follows, the *Ewigkeit* motive occurs in both primary and secondary themes (mm. 44-46 and 87-89, respectively). As discussed in detail, the secondary theme draws its material directly from the Trios of the first movement, including this motive. In the recapitulation, Mahler attempts to synthesize the primary and secondary materials, conflating both sections with an extreme level of discontinuity. The P-theme version of the *Ewigkeit* motive appears several times before the *Durchbruch* of the D-major *chorale* in measure 464. This attempted breakthrough fails, leading to the A-minor conclusion of Part I and the (temporary)

failure of the *Ewigkeit* motive to redeem the past. In Part II, the motive plays a smaller, less foregrounded role. The Scherzo—as the romantic present—attempts to reconcile the disparate elements of Mahler’s life into a positive unity. Mahler embeds the *Ewigkeit* motive within the opening *Ländler*’s main theme (see Example 2.11). Perhaps, as a present-tense representation of Mahler’s life in Vienna, this movement did not need to invoke the motive’s transcendent associations to assist its narrative trajectory. Regardless, Mahler ended the productive summer of 1901 with the Fifth left unfinished, and the major events of the following months would shape both his personal life as well as the role of the *Ewigkeit* motive in the remainder of the symphony.

Symphony No. 5: IV. Adagietto and “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen”

Chapter Two laid out some of the biographical evidence—primarily an anecdote from the conductor Wilhelm Mengelberg—that links the composition of the *Adagietto* with Mahler’s courtship and engagement with Alma. In fact, the *Ewigkeit* motive—from this point on in the remainder of Mahler’s *oeuvre*—becomes inextricably associated with Alma, and I will supplement the evidence of the previous chapter with other corroborating details. Gilbert Kaplan argues that the *Adagietto* functions as a love song by noting some obvious characteristics of the movement: “[t]he composer is renowned for some of the longest movements in symphonic literature, but the *Adagietto* is quite short, extending to only 103 bars, and is the shortest movement Mahler ever composed directly for a symphony. Compared with Mahler’s typical rhythmic and harmonic complexities, the *Adagietto* is simple.”⁹⁶ If Mahler wrote the *Adagietto* as an instrumental love song, this direct and simple mode of expression fits appropriately.

⁹⁶ Gilbert Kaplan, “Adagietto: From Mahler with Love,” 382.

The previous chapter noted the similarities between the *Adagietto* and “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,” and these shared features led La Grange to doubt Mengelberg’s account:

We cannot take such a circumstantial account lightly, coming as it does from a devoted friend of Mahler and one of his most ardent admirers and defenders. But if he is right, then the *Adagietto* and “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,” two pieces so closely akin in atmosphere and thematic material, were written in response to quite different feelings. . . . It seems to me improbable that Mahler could have written two pieces so related in every way with such different meanings. I also find it highly improbable, if Mengelberg’s story is true, that Alma should have failed to mention the true meaning of the *Adagietto* at some time during the half-century in which she survived Mahler.⁹⁷

Admittedly, no explanation exists as to why Alma never mentioned this story herself. But regarding La Grange’s concern over the similarities to “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,” one can provide a reasonable counterpoint to his objections. That the movement and song share thematic material poses little problem when considering that one of the common traits they share is, in fact, the *Ewigkeit* motive. To be sure, melancholic resignation remains the predominant feeling evoked by the song, but a closer consideration of the text reveals a logical connection between movement and song.

Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,
Mit der ich sonst viele Zeit verdorben,
Sie hat so lange nichts von mir vernommen,

Sie mag wohl glauben, ich sei gestorben!

Es ist mir auch gar nichts daran gelegen,
Ob sie mich für gestorben hält.
Ich kann auch gar nichts sagen dagegen,
Denn wirklich bin ich gestorben der Welt.

Ich bin gestorben dem Weltgetümmel
Und ruh’ in einem stillen Gebiet!
Ich leb’ allein in meinem Himmel,
In meinem Lieben, in meinem Lied.

I am lost to the world,
on which I wasted so much time;
it has for so long known nothing of
me,
it may well believe that I am dead!

Not that I am in any way concerned
if it takes me for dead;
nor can I really deny it,
for truly I am dead to the world.

I am dead to the world’s commotion
and at peace in a still land!
I live alone in my own heaven,
in my love, in my song.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 2, 817.

⁹⁸ Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death*, 33-34.

While much of poem emphasizes a detachment from the world, the final stanza characterizes this separation as positive. Most importantly, the *Ewigkeit* motive’s use in “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” pertains to this section of the poem.

Example 3.22: *Rückert-Lieder*, “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,” mm. 52-53



Recalling the various contexts in which the motive surfaces, these associations with peace, heaven, and love, remain consistent with its meaning across Mahler’s other works. Thus, the *Adagietto* and “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” share similar expressive ideas even while evoking diverging emotional atmospheres. In this way, the relationship between these two compositions, rather than disproving Mengelberg’s anecdote, supports its veracity.

Corroboration from the Letters

This still does not explain why Mahler came to associate the *Ewigkeit* motive directly with Alma, but additional evidence, in the form of Mahler’s and Alma’s early correspondence, will illuminate the underlying religious/philosophical underpinning for this expressive shift. Written during the brief period between their engagement and marriage, these letters provide an unusually frank window into Mahler’s worldview. Alma recalled how the two of them frequently discussed philosophical and religious subjects during the early days of their relationship, admitting that during this period of her life, “the influence of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche had

made a free-thinker of me,” and that Mahler “contested my point of view with fervor.”⁹⁹ The letters capture some of this discussion, revealing the connection Mahler made between his relationship with Alma and the *Ewigkeit* motive’s meaning. Shortly after their secret engagement, Mahler wrote:

I believe you feel just as I do: we are fulfilled and united by a power that is beyond and above us. It will be our holy duty tacitly to respect that power. When at such a moment I speak the name of God out loud, the omnipotent sense of your love and of mine will make you realize that this is a power that prevails over both of us and hence holds us in its grasp as one.¹⁰⁰

With the motive’s role as a symbol of divine Love in mind, this statement links Mahler’s feelings for Alma to that broader conception. In the same letter, he clarifies this view further, stating that even during their initial meeting, “[a]lready, then, it was God’s will that we should be united.”¹⁰¹ Shortly after this communication, Mahler wrote to her again, lamenting the public’s lack of understanding for his music. In spite of Alma’s (initially) ambivalent attitude toward his compositions, Mahler claimed that, for her, “love will be your guide and lighten your way towards the obscurest corners.”¹⁰² This reinforces earlier associations between Love and illumination, as first observed in “*Urlicht*.”

The beginning of their relationship was not without serious conflict. In the most significant of these early letters—in fact, of all their correspondence—Mahler rebukes what he perceives as Alma’s immaturity and lays out expectations for their relationship, saying, “I know that I must hurt you, but I have no choice. For I must give voice to everything in your last letter that aggravated me.”¹⁰³ In this infamous letter, Mahler demands that Alma give up her own

⁹⁹ Mahler-Werfel, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*, 20.

¹⁰⁰ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 67.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 67.

compositional ambitions, but it also provides some insight into his worldview. In a particularly intense passage, he criticizes her philosophical outlook:

My Alma! Where are you ideas? Schopenhauer's writings on womanhood, Nietzsche's utterly false and brazenly arrogant theories of masculine supremacy, the gut-rotting, murky fuddle of Maeterlinck, the public-house rhetoric of Bierbaum and co. etc., etc.? - These are not your ideas, thank God, but those of others. Surely this is no idea of yours, that the wonderful, profoundly unfathomable world we live in is nothing but a practical joke played on us by some numbskull, some stupid "natural force," which knows nothing either of itself or of us (and hence stands not even as high as the human beings you so deride), a bubble that one day will simply burst—that my heart, which can fill me with unspeakable joy or torment, is no miracle but merely a lump of flesh with two valves, that my brain is nothing but blood-filled arteries and capillaries in a craftily "meandering" mass of jelly etc. etc.¹⁰⁴

Obviously, this passage attacks Alma's materialism, which Mahler believed she obtained through the social circles in which she moved. At the end of the letter, after requesting a response to his demands, he confesses, "I call to God, though aware that you have not yet made His acquaintance, to guide your hand, my love, in writing the truth and not letting yourself be led astray by ostentation.—For this is a moment of great importance, these are decisions that will weld two people together for eternity."¹⁰⁵ Alma did agree to his terms, but this letter foreshadows many of the problems that would plague the two of them throughout their marriage.

On Christmas Eve 1901, Mahler wrote to her again, explicitly associating their relationship with his beliefs:

Even if we had never met, let us celebrate this day, which unites us, just as it unites all people in the joyous belief of children, as an everlasting token that we, for whom love has brought unity and happiness, should always open our hearts to our fellow men. (For the bond that unites us has been forged in the name of a love that surpasses understanding, divine love as we could call it, and this bond unites us indissolubly with all living creatures.)¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 81.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

This divine Love, which Mahler believed applied equally to his relationship with Alma as to all mankind, unites all things in a manner similar to the way the *Ewigkeit* motive connects Mahler's works. At the letter's end, he makes this even clearer, stating, "[n]othing perhaps could prove more clearly the boundlessness and sanctity of my love for you than my wish . . . to lead us both into those higher regions where we can sense the presence of the Eternal and Divine."¹⁰⁷ Thus, the motive does not so much change its meaning in the Fifth as it becomes more personal in connection with the focus of love in Mahler's life: Alma Schindler. Understanding this supports the interpretation of the *Adagietto* outlined in Chapter Two. As a love song to Alma, it sets the stage for the work's final movement, a vision of future happiness with her.

Symphony No. 5: V. Rondo-Finale and "Liebst du um Schönheit"

During the summer of 1902, Mahler completed composition of the Fifth Symphony with the addition of the fifth and final movement. Part III, taken as a whole, represents the comic future, making use of the *Ewigkeit* motive throughout in the form of quotations from the *Adagietto* and the *romantic hero* theme. As the analysis of that movement demonstrated, Mahler narrativizes the relationship between these two themes to mirror the growing relationship between himself and Alma. This connection allows for the recovery of the second movement's *Durchbruch* and a triumphant close to a work that began in tragedy. That same summer, Mahler composed another independent setting of Rückert poetry, which lends support to the theory that Mahler continued to associate the *Ewigkeit* motive, even after completion of the Fifth, directly with Alma. Mahler never intended the song "Liebst du um Schönheit" to form part of the group of orchestral settings of Rückert poems he composed the previous summer.¹⁰⁸ In fact, this song

¹⁰⁷ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 89.

¹⁰⁸ Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death*, 57.

remains the only Rückert setting that Mahler left un-orchestrated. While an orchestral version by Max Putmann is frequently performed along with the four other *Rückert-Lieder*, Mahler wrote this song for private purposes.¹⁰⁹

Apparently, he intended to surprise Alma with this love song, and she records the story in her diary. La Grange relates, “[h]oping she would find it by chance in his absence, he slipped it into the score of *Siegfried*, which she kept by the piano and often played from. As it happened she did not open it that particular week. He waited until 10 August and then, unable to contain himself any longer, handed her the score.”¹¹⁰ The *Ewigkeit* motive occurs no less than eight times in the vocal line of this short song, twice for each stanza of the poem.

Liebst du um Schönheit,
O nicht mich liebe!
Liebe die Sonne,
Sie trägt ein gold’nes Haar!

If you love for beauty,
Then do not love me!
Love the Sun,
For he has golden hair.

Liebst du um Jugend,
O nicht mich liebe!
Liebe den Frühling,
Der jung ist jedes Jahr!

If you love for youth,
Then do not love me!
Love the spring,
Which is young every year.

Liebst du um Liebe,
O ja mich liebe!
Liebe mich immer,
Dich lieb’ ich immerdar!

If you love for love,
Then yes, do love me!
Love me forever,
I’ll love you evermore!¹¹¹

Example 3.23: “Liebst du um Schönheit,” mm. 23-26

¹⁰⁹ Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death*, 123.

¹¹⁰ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 2, 538.

¹¹¹ Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death*, 38-39.

Thus, in addition to the evidence provided by Mengelberg, the philosophical/religious connections revealed in the letter, and the use of the motive in the Fifth Symphony, “Liebst du um Schönheit” also demonstrates the motive’s profound connection with Alma.¹¹²

“EWIGKEIT” IN MAHLER’S WORLDVIEW

Mahler’s use of the *Ewigkeit* motive demonstrates an over-arching unity among a diverse group of concepts. From the Second Symphony through the Fifth, the motive attaches itself to concepts of eternity, life after death, salvation, illumination, Nature, Love (both divine and romantic), maternity, childhood, and with Alma. As a gesture, it encompasses both aspiration and fulfillment, but it may manifest in both positive and negative polarities. Even when used sporadically, the *Ewigkeit* motive functions as an agential force, shaping a work’s narrative over the complex course of the symphonic drama. While it occasionally occurs as an isolated leitmotif, more commonly Mahler embeds the motive within a larger thematic context. All of these features highlight its immense significance in Mahler’s works as well as his worldview.

Nietzsche and Schopenhauer

Given Mahler’s known intellectual and spiritual influences, what ideas, philosophers, or authors unite the diverse associations of the *Ewigkeit* motive? Several scholars point to the influence of Nietzsche, despite some obvious discrepancies between his and Mahler’s view of

¹¹² While possibly coincidental, it is interesting to note the role of Wagner’s *Siegfried* throughout this discussion of the motive. The *Ewigkeit* motive, as mentioned, possibly comes from this particular work. Alma’s first mention of Mahler in her diary occurs in the context of a performance of *Siegfried* under his direction. And, finally, with “Liebst du um Schönheit,” Mahler intended to surprise her by putting the manuscript inside the score of that particular work. While one would not rest the entirety of the argument on this observation, it does contribute to the overall sense that these elements were, in fact, connected for Mahler.

the world. The moniker of “*Ewigkeit*”—particularly its ascription to an oft-repeated musical motive—may bring to mind Nietzsche’s famous notion of “eternal recurrence,” which he describes in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*:

This life, as thou livest it at present, and hast lived it, thou must live it once more, and also innumerable times; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh, and all the unspeakably small and great in thy life must come to thee again, and all in the same series of sequence—and similarly this spider and this moonlight among the trees, and similarly this moment, and I myself. The eternal sand-glass of existence will here be turned once more, and thou with it, thou speck of dust!¹¹³

It remains ambiguous as to the degree to which Nietzsche actually held to this view. Solomon and Higgins describe it as a “thought-experiment,” and Higgins goes further in arguing that a humorous element resides underneath this passage: “eternal recurrence appears as a comic alternative to these tragic visions [that is, Platonic and Christian traditions], growing out of the realization that ‘God is dead.’”¹¹⁴ In spite of the obvious dissonance between “eternal recurrence” and Mahler’s sincere aspiration toward the transcendent as expressed in the *Ewigkeit* motive, attempts to connect Mahler’s music to this concept would neither be unusual nor unprecedented.

Hefling, for example, puts forward that Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence influenced the rondo forms Mahler employed in the Finales of the Fifth and Seventh Symphonies—both of which feature the *Ewigkeit* motive.¹¹⁵ This disregards the teleological bent of Mahler’s music, present not only on a formal level (even in his Rondo-form movements) but also embodied in the motive itself. For Mahler, the eternal remains a transcendent goal, not an endless cycle of earthly existence. Even more bizarrely, Anton Seljak argues, “[t]he belief in nature and its steady cycles,

¹¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Thomas Common (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2008), 171-72.

¹¹⁴ Solomon and Higgins, *What Nietzsche Really Said*, 203; Kathleen Marie Higgins, *Comic Relief: Nietzsche’s Gay Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 128.

¹¹⁵ Hefling, “Song and Symphony (II). From *Wunderhorn* to Rückert and the middle-period symphonies,” 127.

the belief in eternal recurrence and the steady repetition of the same, is used by Mahler especially in his Second and Third Symphonies as well as in *Das Lied von der Erde*.¹¹⁶ One merely needs to recall the Second Symphony's popular subtitle, "Resurrection," to realize that Mahler's firm belief in life and death—a key component of the *Ewigkeit* motive's significance—directly contradicts this interpretation. Monahan correctly points out that Mahler entertained the somewhat related idea of reincarnation, which he uses to explain the large-scale rotations of the Third's first movement:

If Mahler had at some point adopted Nietzsche's view of "eternal recurrence," it is hardly inconceivable that by 1896 he would already have begun to customize the idea to accommodate his own insatiable transcendentalist leanings. (Needless to say, the musical realities of the Third more readily accommodate a Mahlerian—that is teleological—view of eternal return than a Nietzschean one.) So might we understand the successive rotations as "reincarnations" of a single abstract life-impulse, progressing on the macroscopic level toward some higher goal?¹¹⁷

As Monahan points out, reincarnation involves the return to a new body and a new life, implying teleological progression instead of a static and unchanging repetition of a single life.

Considering the tendency of the *Ewigkeit* motive to unite disparate concepts, one might point to the influence of Schopenhauer, commonly cited as an important figure of Mahler's intellectual life. A central tenet of his philosophy concerns an elaboration of Kant's "thing-in-itself." Although Kant postulated a noumenal world existing behind observable phenomena, it necessarily remained inaccessible to human knowledge and experience. Thus, one can observe a "thing" according to the innate faculties of perception in the phenomenal world, but one cannot know the "thing-in-itself" in its noumenal reality. Schopenhauer, on the other hand, believed he could make reasonable assumptions about the noumena. Since a multiplicity of objects and their

¹¹⁶ Anton Seljak, "About Friedrich Nietzsche's Influence upon the Spiritual World of Mahler," trans. Thomas Stark. *News about Mahler Research* 67 (April 2014): 27.

¹¹⁷ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 212.

separation in time and space form the basis of phenomenal perception, their noumenal reality must exist beyond such limitations. Copleston explains, “[f]or multiplicity can exist only in the spatio-temporal world, the sphere of phenomena. There cannot be more than one metaphenomenal reality or thing-in-itself. In other words, the inside of the world, so to speak, is one reality, whereas the outside, the appearance of this reality, is the empirical world which consists of finite things.”¹¹⁸ This hypothesis does, on the surface, plausibly correspond to the wide-ranging association of the *Ewigkeit* motive.

McGrath argues this case in his examination of the Third Symphony. Although he does not identify the *Ewigkeit* motive by this name or connect it to other manifestations outside the Third, McGrath observes the emergence and prevalent use of what he terms the “life-will” motive (see Example 3.14 above), which emerges out of the development of the symphony’s opening *Weckruf*. In his estimation, the motive “is intended to represent the answering call of the new life born out of dead nature.”¹¹⁹ To explain the meaning of this motive in light of Mahler’s philosophical influences, McGrath argues, “[i]n the fourth movement where this theme is brought into specific relationship with certain words and concepts of Nietzsche’s poem it becomes clear that the theme also symbolizes the striving will in a specific, Nietzschean-Schopenhauerian sense.”¹²⁰ He views Mahler’s use of this motive as reflective of Schopenhauer’s influence, by way of Wagner and through Lipiner. Thus, the *Ewigkeit* motive expresses the will to live, finding release only in resignation and annihilation.¹²¹ McGrath contrasts the “life-will” motive with the final movement’s hymn-like theme, understood as divine Love, and the narrative trajectory of the movement constitutes Mahler’s attempt to

¹¹⁸ Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, 272.

¹¹⁹ McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria*, 134.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 146.

reconcile these two forces. Although the McGrath invokes Christian imagery to describe the salvation that the “life-will” motive represents, he identifies the achieved redemption with a kind of annihilation. He concludes, “[o]f all his intellectual forebears, there was none whom Mahler resembled more in temperament and world view than Schopenhauer, and in his Third, Mahler felt he had captured the will-less serenity that his predecessor had so ardently sought and so rarely found.”¹²²

As with the Nietzschean interpretation, the specific associations of the motive come into conflict with Schopenhauer’s philosophical system at several points. First, Mahler’s theism (however vague) stands in stark contrast to Schopenhauer’s atheism. Second, unless Mahler only ever meant it symbolically, his emphasis on life after death as the *telos* of his musical narratives does not fit with Schopenhauer’s views. Copleston clarifies, “Schopenhauer seems to imply, though he does not express himself clearly, that for the man who has denied the Will death means total extinction. In life he has reduced existence to a tenuous thread, and at death it is finally destroyed. The man has reached the final goal of the denial of the Will to live.”¹²³ Finally, Schopenhauer’s view of love only partially corresponds to Mahler’s, and considering the emphasis on Love in the *Ewigkeit* motive’s expressive contexts, this distinction is worth making.

Schopenhauer condones the kind of love referred to in the term *caritas* (as in charity or compassion), but he does not advocate for the romantic aspect of love as *eros*. In the section of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* titled “The Metaphysics of Sexual Love,” Schopenhauer declares, “all amorousness is rooted in the sexual impulse alone,” and continues: “[n]ext to the love of life, it shows itself here as the strongest and most active of all motives . . . It is the ultimate goal of almost all human effort; it has an unfavorable influence on the most important

¹²² McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria*, 155-6.

¹²³ Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, 285.

affairs, interrupts every hour the most serious occupations, and sometimes perplexes for a while even the greatest minds.”¹²⁴ Given this presupposition, he logically concludes, “[t]hat which makes itself known to the individual consciousness as sexual impulse in general, and without direction to a definite individual of the other sex, is in itself, and apart from the phenomenon, simply the will-to-live.”¹²⁵ Concerning the suffering this causes, “[t]o free it from this is reserved for the *denial* of the will-to-lie; through this denial, the individual will tears itself away from the stem of the species, and gives up that existence in it.”¹²⁶ Therefore, the *Ewigkeit* motive does not completely correspond to Schopenhauer’s notion of love. Although in the context of the Third Symphony the *Ewigkeit* motive might signify *caritas* or *agape* (divine love) more than *eros*, the broader use of the motive—emerging with greater clarity after its association with Alma in 1901—goes beyond this narrow reading to embrace love as a procreative force, contra Schopenhauer. In this regard, Mahler finds himself more in line with Nietzsche, but other philosophical sources might serve as even more direct influences.

Fechner

Among the philosophers that captured Mahler’s interest, Fechner presents a compelling alternative to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche for understanding the intellectual foundations of the *Ewigkeit* motive. The core of Fechner’s philosophy coheres with Mahler’s worldview in ways relevant to the discussion of this motive. Fechner puts forward what he calls the “Daylight View”—consisting of “[b]elief in one only God, whose consciousness extends in breadth as far beyond that of men as in height it excels human consciousness”—in opposition to the “Night

¹²⁴ Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 2, 533.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 535.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 560.

View,” where “the human consciousness, instead of the divine consciousness, is regarded as the highest that exists.”¹²⁷ By virtue of his theism, Mahler’s views accord more with Fechner’s than with Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Fechner also defends the notion of life after death, which Mahler affirmed throughout his life. Both views coexist within the expressive unity of the *Ewigkeit* motive. Mahler emphasizes this connection in a letter to his close friend Friedrich Löhr where he laments, “I find my ‘successes’ especially painful, for one is misunderstood before one has got out what one has to say,” and he continues, “I feel so homesick! Oh for a quiet corner at home! When shall I have earned that? I fear—only over yonder where all of us and all things shall be gathered together.”¹²⁸ Thus, life after death and the unity of all things form a connection, expressed through the *Ewigkeit* motive, which one finds in the philosophy of Fechner.

A significant aspect of Fechner’s outlook comes from his particular understanding of the relation of God to Creation, which he summarizes in a passage from *The Three Reasons and Grounds of Faith*:

God as spirit has a relation to the corporeal world. The relation which subsists between spirit and body we learn in ourselves. But God, as the most universal, the greatest and highest spirit, has a relation to the most universal, the greatest and highest manifestations of the corporeal world. We can learn from ourselves how, with the broadening of the sphere and the elevation of the scale of the spirit, its relation to the corporeal world is broadened and exalted. The higher spirit will correspond to a more highly developed organism. If in this direction we broaden and exalt still further, we shall find that the broadest and highest Spirit corresponds to the broadest and most highly developed organism, that is, to the world itself—not the inorganic simply, but the whole world, including the origins, all the history, and the fate of the creatures that people it.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Walter Lowrie, ed. and trans., *Religion of a Scientist: Selections from Gustav Theodor Fechner* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1946), 222.

¹²⁸ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 193.

¹²⁹ Lowrie, *Religion of a Scientist*, 143-44.

In other words, God exists as one universal Soul (or Spirit—Fechner uses the two terms interchangeably), and the totality of the universe represents the corporeality of that Soul.¹³⁰ Within that totality, lesser souls and bodies find their existence, but all things only exist as part of the greater whole. Fechner extends this to animals, plants, and even to stars and planets. Bruno Walter relates that Mahler particularly enjoyed Fechner’s *Nana, or the Spiritual Life of Plants*.¹³¹ In that work, Fechner argues, “[i]f one concedes a God who is at once omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent (not only alongside of nature and above it, as the common opinion prefers to conceive it), then in a certain sense the universal animation of the world by God is already admitted, and nothing in the world, neither stone, nor plant, will be an exception to this.”¹³² Considering the above-mentioned letter to Löhr and the programmatic ideas associated with the Third Symphony, one can clearly see that Mahler identified with Fechner’s position. The *Wunderhorn* poem used for *Urlicht* also resonates with this view. When Fechner says, “[i]f the earth is God’s, then we are of God,” one might recall *Urlicht*’s declaration: “I am from God and want to return to God!”¹³³

Fechner’s philosophy closely relates to the ideas surrounding the *Ewigkeit* motive. If we consider the motive under the rubric of Fechner’s view of the soul or spirit, this becomes even clearer. First, the *Ewigkeit* motive, as representing the soul and connecting all things together in God, resolves the tension of its associations with both the transcendent and natural worlds. Second, the associations with life-after-death, salvation, and the gestural qualities of the motive itself come together in the soul’s yearning for higher unity with God, achieved only in death.

¹³⁰ Lowrie, *Religion of a Scientist*, 134. Fechner clarifies this, stating that his discussion will proceed “understanding spirit and soul as having the *same* significance in contrast to the body.”

¹³¹ Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, trans. supervised Lotte Walter Lindt (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 153.

¹³² Lowrie, *Religion of a Scientist*, 163-64.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 153; Mahler, *Symphony No. 2*, vol. 1, 279.

Fechner claims: “if the world all around us is the living body of God, and the earth all about us is a vital and animated part of this body, a lower within the higher, and finally everything here is included in God, then our death is only a particular instance of metabolism and of a spiritual change of place in the living body of God, a migration from the narrow cell into the more ample house.”¹³⁴ Finally, tying the *Ewigkeit* motive to Fechner’s conception of the soul also explains its tendency to drive the narrative of the symphonies in which it appears. In the broadest strokes, Fechner explains his view of the meta-narrative of the universe:

All the pain and suffering, indeed all the evil in the world, exists not by God’s will or His permission but by a necessity of existence; but by a like necessity there is on the part of God, and hence of the world-order which depends on Him, a constant striving to abolish evil and to reconcile it, a striving in which His creatures too must share. Only when God has abolished and reconciled evil in all His creatures is this finally and completely accomplished; and the wider and higher the means at His disposal reach in time and space and grades of eminence above His creatures to the loftier spheres of life, the more certain will the reconciliation and the abolition be. It is only from on high it can be expected. With such a faith a man can calmly lay him down to sleep.¹³⁵

This clearly reflects Mahler’s tragic-to-transcendent narratives, which feature the *Ewigkeit* motive (as soul) in its aspirational striving toward transcendence over suffering. It presents the individual struggle as reflective of the universal movement towards “the loftier spheres of life.”

But what of love, both romantic and divine? This aspect of the *Ewigkeit* motive plays such an important role in Mahler’s symphonic narratives that any attempt to provide a philosophical underpinning to it should include this concept. Fechner tends not to emphasize or use the word “love,” whether of God or person-to-person, instead preferring to measure degrees of “pleasure” and “unpleasure.” Regarding the interconnectedness of all things, Fechner explains, “[f]or since God bears within Himself all His creatures, He also bears within Himself

¹³⁴ Lowrie, *Religion of a Scientist*, 146-47.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 276.

all their pleasure and unpleasure.”¹³⁶ This relates to his view on the progress of history, one with which Mahler probably sympathized:

In terms of an image often employed, I think of the whole progress of the world as a symphony, in which indeed more and deeper dissonances occur than in the symphonies of our concert halls, but which nevertheless are on the way to their resolution, on the whole and for each individual, and by this harmonious resolution raise the level of pleasure far above that of a symphony which would produce only accords. In part, the discords reach beyond the now into the hereafter; but the hereafter will not be weary in laboring on to resolve and reconcile them.¹³⁷

One could certainly subsume Love—and all its potential meanings—within Fechner’s views on pleasure, and with that in mind, the notion of the continual progress of pleasure matches Mahler’s redemption-through-love narratives (as in the Fifth in particular). The lack of emphasis on Love, however, suggests that Mahler’s views on this topic might stem from yet another source. Another subtle, but significant difference between Mahler and Fechner comes in their relationship to Christianity. His pantheism notwithstanding, Fechner maintained that he in no way contradicted the teachings of Christ. In passages from *Zend-Avesta*, he adamantly defends the Christian basis of his views and his reverence for the Bible.¹³⁸ As discussed in Chapter 1, Floros believes Mahler possessed a similar form of the faith. But as more recent commentators argue, his conversion to Catholicism and frequent use of Christian imagery (Symphonies Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 8, especially) can be explained in other ways. None of this diminishes the impact of Fechner’s philosophy on Mahler and the expressive meaning of the *Ewigkeit* motive. In fact, considering the motive as soul (both individual and universal) significantly illuminates this.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Lowrie, *Religion of a Scientist*, 236.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 267, 270.

¹³⁹ Despite this, I do not recommend renaming the motive since “*Ewigkeit*” still captures, in a general way, its expressive content.

For now, however, this investigation will turn to another source, which may explain all of the motive's associations even more clearly.

Goethe

Goethe's importance for Mahler cannot be overstated. Walter goes so far as to say, "the sun in the sky of [Mahler's] spiritual world was Goethe. He had a remarkable knowledge of his work, and, thanks to a unique memory, would quote endlessly from it. He was a constant reader of Goethe's conversations with Eckermann and others."¹⁴⁰ Mahler's letters affirm this view with frequent references and quotations from Goethe. A letter from 1908 demonstrates Walter's report about the conversations with Eckermann. Concerning this volume, Mahler says, "I have been reading bits of it here and there, again and again, for decades, and I can say it is one of my dearest possessions."¹⁴¹ As demonstrated in the first chapter, Fischer establishes Goethe's influence on Mahler as well as how that relates to other thinkers Mahler admired, especially Fechner. The task here, then, is to elucidate the aspects of Goethe's thought relevant to understanding the *Ewigkeit* motive.

One way in which Mahler aligns more with Goethe's thought than with Fechner's is in his relationship to Christianity. In an essay on Goethe's beliefs, H. B. Nisbet argues that while "[h]e derived early poetic inspiration from [the Bible] . . . Goethe's relationship with the New Testament and Christianity is altogether more complex," concluding that "Goethe became increasingly aware that he could not accept many of the central tenets of Christianity."¹⁴² While Goethe certainly admired Christ and the gospel stories, Eckermann notes that he also put Jesus

¹⁴⁰ Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, 155.

¹⁴¹ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 326.

¹⁴² H. B. Nisbet, "Religion and Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Goethe*, ed. Lesley Sharpe, 219-31 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 219, 220.

on par with other great figures of the past.¹⁴³ Similarly, as Fischer pointed out, Mahler once compared Jesus with Plato, placing them on equal footing. One might also point to Alfred Roller's recollection of Mahler's religiosity in which he provides an interesting anecdote:

He was deeply religious. His faith was that of a child. God is love and love is God. This idea came up a thousand times in his conversation. I once asked him why he did not write a mass, and he seemed taken aback. "Do you think I could take that upon myself? Well, why not? But no, there's the credo in it." And he began to recite the credo in Latin. "No, I couldn't do it."

But after a rehearsal of the Eighth in Munich he called cheerfully across to me, referring to this conversation: "There you are, that's my mass."

I never heard a word of blasphemy from him. But he needed no intermediary to God. He spoke with Him face to face. God lived easily within him.¹⁴⁴

This revealing passage communicates several things. First, it demonstrates the degree to which Love forms the core of Mahler's metaphysical notions. Second, it communicates a certain apathy, perhaps even aversion, towards the dogmas of Christianity as articulated in the Nicene Creed. Most importantly, however, this passage relates that Mahler thought of his Eighth Symphony as his "mass." Even if delivered in a joking manner, this remark proves useful when considering the Eighth's setting of *Faust II*. Therefore, understanding Goethe's religious and philosophical beliefs, particularly as revealed through his *Faust*, provides the key for unlocking the symbolism of the *Ewigkeit* motive.

Goethe's views on Nature and God closely resemble those of Fechner (albeit in less Christianized form). In *Goethe's World View*, Frederick Ungar surveys Goethe's writings on a number of topics and groups them thematically. Concerning Nature, Ungar notes, "[f]or Goethe God and nature were one, and he could conceive of nothing that did not have its origin in the

¹⁴³ J. K. Moorhead, ed., *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*, trans. John Oxenford (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1998), 423.

¹⁴⁴ Norman Lebrecht, *Mahler Remembered* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 164.

same divine source.”¹⁴⁵ Nisbet argues that, at least partially, Goethe’s pantheism stemmed from his appreciation of Spinoza: “[h]e certainly shared, in very general terms, Spinoza’s belief in the oneness of everything, in an immanent god, and in the central role of love.”¹⁴⁶ Thus, the *Ewigkeit* motive’s association with the natural and divine realms as well as its unifying function fits just as easily with Goethe’s views as with Fechner’s. This extends to Goethe’s views on life-after-death as well. To Eckermann, he proclaimed, “[m]an should believe in immortality; he has a right to this belief; it corresponds with the want of his nature, and he may believe in the promises of religion.”¹⁴⁷ Even further, Goethe held similar views on the teleology of the world, the meta-narrative in which Fechner believed:

The capacity for ennobling all that is sensual, of blending the utterly inanimate with the living spirit, is the surest token of our supernatural origin; and no matter how much we are drawn and shackled by a thousand and one phenomena of this earth, a resistless longing compels us ever to raise our eyes heavenward; for a deep and unfathomable sense lends us conviction that we are denizens of those worlds that so mysteriously shine above us, and that some day we shall thither return.¹⁴⁸

While perhaps not sharing Fechner’s animism to its fullest extent, Goethe’s writings on the soul offer a similar view, but the subtle, yet important, differences in their views merit exploring.

Fechner begins his discussion of souls by differentiating between three possible definitions:

In the first sense spirit and soul as a whole are opposed to the body as a whole. In the second sense the spirit is the active principle, masculine, creative, generative (hence the words *ingenium* and *genius*), while the soul is the desiring, the receptive, the womanly side. The spirit is king with the queen beside him: the king rules the country, the queen

¹⁴⁵ Frederick Ungar, ed., *Goethe’s World View: Presented in His Reflections and Maxims*, trans. Heinz Norden (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1963), 9.

¹⁴⁶ Nisbet, “Religion and Philosophy,” 222.

¹⁴⁷ Moorhead, *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*, 287.

¹⁴⁸ Ungar, *Goethe’s World View: Presented in His Reflections and Maxims*, 51. The one draw-back of Ungar’s otherwise helpful volume is that he does not provide citations for the quotes from Goethe, so it is difficult to determine precisely from where this quotation derives.

rules the king. In the third sense the spirit is the higher, the soul the lower—no longer a queen but a maidservant.¹⁴⁹

Fechner opts for the first sense, but the second one he mentions presents an idea relevant to Goethe's thought and, most importantly, to Mahler's interpretation of Goethe. In his conversations with Eckermann, Goethe links the individual soul to action, stating, "[t]o me, the eternal existence of my soul is proved from my idea of activity; if I work on incessantly till my death, nature is bound to give me another form of existence when the present one can no longer sustain my spirit."¹⁵⁰ For Goethe, the soul consists of what Fechner terms the "active principle" or "spirit," which he characterized as masculine. When referring to this aspect of soul, Goethe frequently uses the term "entelechy," which he borrows from Aristotle. Goethe claims, "[e]very *Entelechy* is a piece of eternity, and the few years during which it is bound to the earthly body do not make it old."¹⁵¹ Fischer gives a summary of the term's meaning:

Derived from the Greek and meaning "having a goal or perfection within itself," the term was coined by Aristotle to describe a formal principle necessary to guide a living organism along the path of self-development. According to Aristotle, all who are capable of achieving anything already contain within them the potential to do so. . . . The idea was later taken up by Leibniz, who expanded the no less Greek concept of the monad (from *monas*, meaning "unit") to that of entelechy.¹⁵²

Leibniz, an important philosophical influence on Goethe, conceived of monads as simple substances that lie at the base of all material reality, each with distinct and intrinsic qualities, which may combine with other monads to create more complex substances.¹⁵³ Copleston explains, "[e]ach monad develops according to its own inner constitution or law; it is susceptible of increase or diminution through the activity of other monads, since the simple cannot have

¹⁴⁹ Lowrie, *Religion of a Scientist*, 134.

¹⁵⁰ Moorhead, *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*, 287.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹⁵² Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 402.

¹⁵³ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 4, *Modern Philosophy: From Descartes to Leibniz* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 296-97.

parts added to it or subtracted from it. But each one, being gifted with some degree of perception, mirrors the universe, that is, the total system, in its own way.”¹⁵⁴ Despite their definition as simple, and thus indivisible, substances, Leibniz describes monads as consisting of active and passive principles. Entelechy, or substantial form, serves as the monad’s “positive tendency to action,” and what Leibniz called “prime matter” forms the monad’s “passive component.”¹⁵⁵ Similarly to Fechner’s second sense of soul, Leibniz’s monad serves as a single unit composed of active (masculine) and passive (feminine) components, which as Copleston points out, Leibniz “conceived according to an analogy with souls.”¹⁵⁶

Whether or not Goethe held to these distinctions remains unclear since he tended to use these concepts interchangeably. Fischer notes, “Goethe equated the terms entelechy and monad, which he also regarded as synonymous with the soul that strives to bring to perfection all that is enshrined within it.”¹⁵⁷ Goethe’s *Faust*, however, does provide clues that reinforce this distinction between the masculine/active and the feminine/passive forces. William Page Andrews, in *Goethe’s Key to Faust*, produces an interpretation of the work that relies heavily on Goethe’s own statements about its content. Goethe’s aim, according to Andrews, “is to give us a new basis for religious belief, by setting forth that right attitude towards the Primal Source of Life.”¹⁵⁸ Andrews corroborates this by pointing to the closing scene of Part II:

[Goethe] reiterates this in the last speech of the completed drama; which speech assures us that all of the past is only a symbol of the controlling action of a Power unreachable with our imagination, which is seen operative in the events of life; an indescribable power, visible as an Eternal-feminine influence, which evolves life and leads man upward and onward. This is the theme with which the poem opens and also closes, and Goethe

¹⁵⁴ Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 4, 297.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 298-99.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁵⁷ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 403.

¹⁵⁸ William Page Andrews, *Goethe’s Key to Faust: A Scientific Basis for Religion and Morality and for a Solution of the Enigma of Evil* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1913), x.

has told us that it is a theme to which all the incidents of the drama are adapted as illustrations thereof.¹⁵⁹

Thus, the Eternal-feminine represents a passive force, drawing all of life unto itself through Love. Andrews clarifies this, stating, “[t]his power of attraction manifests itself in the attractive force of Beauty in Woman, which controls the course of life of the men about her (as the Sun [in German, a feminine noun: *Die Sonne*] controls the course of the planets [Goethe calls them “brother-spheres” in the Prologue]), and this Power leads men on to creative action in accord with itself.”¹⁶⁰ In light of this, Andrews maintains:

If we observe that the happiness which follows the creative action of love is the result of our individual activity being thus in harmony with the creative, controlling tendency of the whole of existence; and that the like result, from the same accord, follows in every department of human activity, then we have learned something of the laws governing all existence, and have thus mastered the secret of happiness; which, Goethe tells us, it is the poet’s intention to impart, by showing us all the various activities of mankind, and their relations to the controlling tendency of life.¹⁶¹

In other words, understanding this balance between active/passive and masculine/feminine forces forms the basis of the “religion” Goethe espoused, where the “harmony of the individual part with the trend of the whole is, in his view, also the basis of all morality: morality being the action which is in accord with the immutable law, or trend of existence.”¹⁶² Therefore, connecting together this interpretation of reality back to Goethe’s pantheistic views, one can conclude that, according to Goethe, the totality of the universe consists of a world-soul (God) that functions as the Love-force (a combination of Nietzschean *eros* and Schopenhauerian *caritas*), that draws individual souls in their creative striving to higher levels of existence and unification with the divine.

¹⁵⁹ Andrews, *Goethe’s Key to Faust*, 11-12.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 20.

That Mahler both understood and believed in this interpretation of *Faust* is demonstrated in a famous letter to Alma from 1909, where he explains the final scene of the drama:

Each scene (particularly in Part II, by which time the author has matured to his task) points ever more clearly, if at first indistinctly, towards this one final, inexpressible, scarcely imaginable and most intimate of ideas. So here everything is an allegory, a means of expressing an idea, which is by definition inadequate to fulfill the requirements. While it may be possible to describe transitory things, we can feel or imagine but never approach what underlies them (i.e. all that which ‘here is achieved’), for it is transcendental and unchanging, hence inexpressible. That which leads us forwards with mystical strength—which every creature, perhaps even every stone, knows with absolute certainty to be the center of its existence, and which Goethe here calls Eternal Femininity—here too, an allegory—namely a fixed point, the goal—is the antithesis of eternal longing, striving, motion towards that goal—in a word, Eternal Masculinity. You are quite right to characterize the latter as the love force. There are myriads of metaphors and designations for it (just consider how children, animals, people on a lower or higher plane of existence delve and spin). With ever increasing clarity, Goethe himself presents an endless hierarchy of such allegories, and towards the close he intensifies them still further: Faust’s impassioned search for Helena, the Walpurgis-Nacht, the inchoate Homunculus, the numerous entelechies of lower and higher degree, all presented with conviction and transparency. Mater Gloriosa, the personification of Eternal Femininity, is the culmination. . . . Eternal Femininity has carried us forward. We have arrived, we are at rest, we are in possession of that which on earth we could only desire or strive for. Christians speak of “eternal bliss,” and for the sake of my allegory I have made use of this beautiful, sufficiently mythological concept.¹⁶³

This passage perfectly recapitulates the central ideas of Goethe’s thought, demonstrating the profundity of Mahler’s knowledge of his work. That Mahler embraced this artistic vision of reality bears out in the ease with which one can apply it to the *Ewigkeit* motive. Even further evidence that these concepts form the basis of the motive’s expressive function comes with its use in the Eighth Symphony. In its second part, Mahler sets this very scene to music, utilizing the *Ewigkeit* motive an astounding number of times as an expression of the Love-force as embodied by the Mater Gloriosa, which beckons Faust’s soul as he ascends into the “higher spheres.” In his setting of the *Chorus Mysticus*, the connection becomes complete:

¹⁶³ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 326-27.

Example 3.24: Symphony No. 8/Part II, mm. 1464-68

1 Soprano Solo (*nicht hervortretend*)

Das E-wig-Weib - li-che zieht uns hin - an,_____

Ewigkeit
(*pp*)

The motive’s gesture, varied associations, and the text (“*Das Ewigweibliche / Zieht uns hinan,*” meaning “Eternal Womanhood / Draws us onward”) all come together in a singular expressive moment, serving as the capstone to Mahler’s use of the motive since the Second Symphony.

Conclusions

Therefore, taking all these influences into consideration, one may conclude that the motive represents, in broad strokes, the entire Goethean drama of humanity’s struggle for transcendence and its ultimate fulfillment through the attractive power of Love, indicated through the motive’s gestural qualities of aspiration and fulfillment. At the cosmic level, the motive signifies, on the one hand, God as universal soul, the source of all life and Love, allegorically understood as the passive Eternal Feminine and, on the other hand, Creation itself as God-in-Nature, the error-prone striving drawn by Love to participate in higher levels of existence and understood as the active Eternal Masculine. More locally, however, the motive signifies this duality and teleological narrative as procreation, both literally as in romantic love and metaphorically as in artistic creation (Mahler frequently referred to his symphonies as his “children”). Thus, the *Ewigkeit* motive serves as an extremely flexible and powerfully expressive symbol of the core concepts of Mahler’s worldview, one that could function on both macro and micro levels. For the purposes of the middle-period works, this microcosmic picture of the

Goethean meta-narrative finds pointed expression in the *Ewigkeit* motive as Alma, the physical embodiment of Love in his life.

THE *EWIGKEIT* MOTIVE AND THE TRAGEDY OF THE SIXTH SYMPHONY

Movement 1: The Triumph of *Ewigkeit*

Given the evidence, one may, with a fair degree of confidence, accept Alma's story of Mahler's attempt to "capture her in a theme" (even if doubts remain concerning the other programmatic details). Returning to Monahan's article on the "Alma theme," the major insight of his study comes with a critique and correction of the oft-repeated narrative of the Sixth's composition. Alma's memoir paints a picture of blissful and carefree married life during the summers of 1903 and 1904, which stands in sharp contrast to the Sixth's bleakness. Monahan explains, "[w]hy, critics have often asked, would Mahler have composed this consummate essay in tragedy during a time of such overwhelming personal triumph—one that found him at the height of his professional success, married to one of Vienna's most desirable women, and blessed with healthy children whom he adored?"¹⁶⁴ A narrative of the Sixth as a prophetic vision of Mahler's future tragedies emerged to fill the ironic void left by this discrepancy. And yet, the primary sources, particularly Alma's diaries, suggest a different picture. Monahan explains:

The couple married on 9 March 1902. Alma's adjustment to cohabitation—and, from November of that year, motherhood—was difficult. . . . Accommodating Mahler's strict routine and repairing his muddled finances had been challenging enough, but the isolation brought on by their summer retreat to Maiernigg was almost too much to bear. By July, she was routinely convinced that marrying Mahler had been a mistake, that her subjugation and neglect would prove unsustainable.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Monahan, "I have tried to capture you . . ." 140.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 143.

These difficulties continued into the following summer of 1903, when Mahler began work on the Sixth Symphony.

By this time, their conflicting worldviews—clearly observable in the letters of their courtship and engagement—were still not resolved. In a letter from 2 April 1903, Mahler wrote to her discussing Fechner’s *Zend-Avesta*:

Fechner’s world is strangely like Rückert’s; the two are closely related, and one side of me is deeply in accord with both of them. How few people know anything of those two! <When you come to understand them, it will be a great step forward. Then you will be able to rid yourself of certain trivial ideas that are obscuring your vision and blinding you to reality. From your letters I can feel how inhibited you are, and how much torment and turmoil this causes you. How little you have learned from following my example! What use are [Friedrich] Paulsen and all the prophets, if you persistently get bogged down with them?>¹⁶⁶

The editorial marks (the brackets: < >) indicate a section of this letter that Alma excised for its initial publication, which La Grange and Weiss restore for their edition. It appears that even decades after Mahler’s death, Alma resented his condescension. A brief glance at their correspondence reveals numerous examples of similar passages. That same summer, Alma wrote in her diary, “I long for creativity. My present life is a delusion. I need my art! . . . If only Zemlinsky were here to work with me. But I can’t ignore Gustav Mahler’s utterly unfounded jealousy. And so I have nobody. I don’t feel inwardly unhappy. Not at all. But I wouldn’t be averse to a few more visible or palpable signs of Gustav’s love.”¹⁶⁷ While the situation appears to have improved by the following year (1904) after the birth of their second child and Mahler’s completion of the Sixth, Monahan rightly concludes that “the tragic content of the Sixth may have firmer foundations in Mahler’s home life than the received wisdom dictates. The ‘paradox’ critics so often cite . . . dissolves instantly when we acknowledge that Mahler’s domestic

¹⁶⁶ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 118. According to the editorial notes, Friedrich Paulsen was a German philosopher and author of *Einleitung in die Philosophie*.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

situation was, if not quite ‘tragic,’ at least an ongoing source of tension, distraction, and disenchantment.”¹⁶⁸

Monahan interprets the theme in light of these biographical details. Like other scholars, he characterizes the driving musical and narrative thrust of the first movement as a conflict arising between the primary and secondary themes. If S does indeed represent Alma, the widely held view of sonata-form themes as male (primary) and female (secondary) certainly holds true here.¹⁶⁹ The explosive energy of the “Alma theme,” however, breaks the stereotype of a more passive second subject. Like others before him, Monahan critiques the theme’s apparent “defects,” leading him to conclude, “as much as [Mahler] might have wished to capture his lover’s unruly vivacity, he seems unable to fully envision what a theme of this sort—a truly liberated feminine impulse—would actually sound like, how it might develop according to the ‘logic’ of its own ‘inner idea,’ as he liked to say.”¹⁷⁰ These defects include “(1) the disparity between its orchestral excesses and its constructive shortfalls; (2) its ‘dependency’ on the primary theme for materials; and (3) its inscrutable pairing with the peculiar S² march.”¹⁷¹ (By S², Monahan refers to the intrusion of march material into the secondary theme, which occurs at m. 91.)

Taking these problems into account, Monahan postulates: “these disjunctions—between the fervor with which Mahler composes his theme and his lack of insight into how it might be carried through, between the music’s own effusive intensity and its developmental vapidness—mirror perfectly the disconnect between Mahler’s insatiable, high-minded affects and their

¹⁶⁸ Monahan, “I have tried to capture you . . .” 145.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 147.

flirtatious, independent-minded object.”¹⁷² He even goes so far as to suggest that S², the interruptive march, might represent Mahler and Alma’s child: “could we not imagine ourselves being offered a glimpse of the newest addition to the composer’s domestic lineup, the progeny that Mahler sought.”¹⁷³ Thus, P represents Mahler, and the conflict of P and S plays out the martial discontent of their life together. Despite the temporary victory of the “Alma theme” in the first movement, the Finale, Monahan suggests, again takes up the conflict between the primary theme’s minor-mode march and the secondary theme’s soaring lyricism. The tragic outcome of this movement, and the symphony as a whole, suggests a narrative of Alma, “placed in the role of sacrificial lamb, betrayed by those closest to her and called to endure a ‘suffering’ (as claimed in her diary) that ultimately stood in to bring ‘joy’ into the world.”¹⁷⁴

While compelling and supported with considerable musical and biographical evidence, Monahan’s interpretation remains unconvincing because his analysis lacks a more precise understanding of the *Ewigkeit* motive. Even further, he assumes that since the secondary theme of the first movement represents a person, the other thematic materials must represent persons as well. But prior uses of the *Ewigkeit* motive refers not only to Alma but, simultaneously, to something greater that she represents. Ultimately, the conflict of P and S in this movement re-stages the primary narrative drive of virtually all of Mahler’s music: a battle of life and death. More than just personal life and death, this struggle takes place on the broadest scale between eternal life and eternal death. Moreover, that Mahler would place himself in the role of antagonist in his own symphony is virtually unthinkable given his unwavering self-confidence. Also, this would require an awareness of Alma’s struggles that he clearly did not possess (even if

¹⁷² Monahan, “I have tried to capture you . . .,” 149.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 163-64.

conscious of the tension between them during this period). The tragic narrative of the Sixth, however, remains unexplained. How can the *Ewigkeit* fail to overcome death in the final movement if it triumphed in the first? Perhaps a closer look at the nature of that triumph in the first movement will provide an answer.

It is important to note that the interpretation that follows extends the notion of narrative identity encountered in the previous chapter. That is, I do not make the claim that this interpretation represents Mahler's expressive intentions. Rather, in keeping with the parameters of the Fifth Symphony's analysis, I aim to present a reasonable interpretation based both on an underlying worldview structure—in this case, the aspects of how the *Ewigkeit* motive, as a symbol, represents his fundamental presuppositions about the world—and the circumstances of the work's composition, as discussed above. In other words, the Sixth Symphony continues the Ricoeurian notion of self-interpretation that Mahler began in the Fifth (whether consciously or not), with wildly divergent results.

It does not come as a surprise that the “Alma theme” appears in F major. This particular key recalls the musical moment when the *Ewigkeit* motive first became connected with Alma: the *Adagietto*. The character of its use in the Sixth, however, differs substantially from the *Adagietto* in a number of ways. First, the gesture of the motive resembles some of the earlier, prototypical examples that showcase the basic x, y, z elements but with a stepwise move from x to y instead of an upward leap. Second, the effect of the orchestration—sometimes described as overblown or tasteless—expresses an over-the-top Romanticism in contrast to the subtle string orchestration of the *Adagietto*. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the *Ewigkeit* motive functions exclusively in the context of the secondary theme and its role in the sonata-form structure. This contrasts with the motive's relative independence in other works, particularly the

Fifth. In this way, the fate of the *Ewigkeit* motive, as everything associated with it, is bound up with its obligations as the secondary theme of this movement (and, as discussed below, the Finale as well).

Because of this fact, the motive, while triumphant in the coda, reveals several weaknesses. The movement repeatedly reinforces this by treating the “Alma theme” as a static idea that resists development and growth, demonstrating its dependence on primary-theme materials that frequently interrupt its presentation. Tellingly, the coda’s moment of breakthrough depends on other musical elements outside of the “Alma theme.” The subtle reference to the development’s *pastoral* interpolation in measure 429 draws from Nature, and the militaristic reformulation of S that follows (including the conflation of S and the “collapse motive”) drastically alters its character with P-related elements. The climactic dissonance at measure 472 significantly undercuts the victorious music by colliding three of the movement’s most potent symbols: the “collapse motive,” the *Ewigkeit* motive (in a monumentally clear-cut example of *x*, *y*, and *z*), and the falling triad from D major to D minor (what Floros called the “major-minor seal”).¹⁷⁵

Example 3.25: Symphony No. 6/I, mm. 472-74

¹⁷⁵ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 166.

At this point, Monahan's interpretation inexplicably falters: "hoisted to the subdominant, it serves as a functional progression that only *intensifies* the tonic-major confirmation. Its rhetorical hallmarks, disruption and modal collapse, are wholly neutralized."¹⁷⁶ He compares this moment to other positive examples from Wagner and Strauss (*Götterdämmerung*, Act III, mm. 1596-98; *Tristan und Isolde*, Act I, mm. 15-16 and Act III, mm. 1695-99; *Tod und Verklärung*, mm. 482-83). But this overlooks several important features of this moment. First, it does in fact create a disruption by undercutting the most (potentially) definitive statement of the *Ewigkeit* motive in its most typical and aspirational form (it includes *y*'s upward leap rather than a step). Far from neutralized, the effect reinforces the power of the Symphony's motto. Second, none of the examples he puts forth foreground the dissonance created by the appoggiatura to the degree that Mahler does. In the Wagnerian examples, the dynamic markings stay at *piano* or *pianissimo*, whereas Mahler calls for *fortissimo* and a crash from the percussion battery. Most tellingly, none of his examples feature a chord progression of a major-to-minor triad. Thus, the traditional interpretation of this moment as one of tragic foreshadowing seems the most sensible, particularly given the symbolic weight it carries.

The Middle Movements: The Absence of *Ewigkeit*

The Scherzo and Andante do not require substantial comment, largely due to the fact the *Ewigkeit* motive does not appear in them in any clearly identifiable or significant way. This may come as a surprise given its consistent use in the middle movements of previous symphonies. A few comments will take stock of the ways Mahler moves the Sixth's narrative towards the Finale. I defer discussion of the proper movement order to the many scholarly works on this

¹⁷⁶ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 130.

controversy. The choice between orderings, it seems, lies between, on the one hand, narrative and tonal coherence (the original order), and, on the other hand, Mahler's final wishes and certain other aesthetic considerations (the revised order). I prefer the original order, but it seems that Mahlerians face a situation well-known among Bruckner scholars: the coexistence of multiple and historically/theoretically defensible versions of the same work.

II. Scherzo. Wuchtig

The Scherzo follows on the heels of the first movement (of course, only in Mahler's original version) with an immediate repudiation. As many scholars point out, it begins in A minor, creating a macro-level major-minor seal of fate at its outset. Also, the introductory measures mimic those of the first movement, recasting its pounding forward drive into triple meter. According to Floros, "[t]he second movement of the Sixth is possibly the most demonic of Mahler's scherzos. The performance instructions—*wuchtig* and *wie gepeitscht* (as if whipped)—gives an impression of the generally eerie character of the main sections."¹⁷⁷ Likewise, Hefling characterizes the movement as "an eerie admixture of Ländler, march, and 'altväterisch' ('old-fashioned') trio," which functions as a "Dance of Death, an ancient cultural topos common to the visual arts, literature and music."¹⁷⁸ Mahler appears to double-down on the sinister aspects of the first movement: the dotted march-rhythms, garish trills and grace-notes, and the use of xylophone.¹⁷⁹ The structure of the movement proves relatively straightforward: Scherzo (mm. 1-96) – Trio I (mm. 97-198) – Scherzo (mm. 199-272) – Trio II (mm. 273-371) – Scherzo (mm. 372-411) – Coda (mm. 412-446).¹⁸⁰ The Trios, with their off-kilter meter changes,

¹⁷⁷ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 174.

¹⁷⁸ Hefling, "Song and Symphony (II). From *Wunderhorn* to Rückert and the middle-period symphonies," 121.

¹⁷⁹ For comparison, see 6/I, mm. 123b-30 (beginning of the development) and 6/II (Scherzo), mm. 7-18.

¹⁸⁰ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 172-73.

provide some solace from the A-minor Scherzo sections. Interestingly, their respective keys of F major and D major correspond to the tonalities of the “Alma theme” in the first movement’s exposition (F major) and recapitulation (D major).

In the transition from Trio I to the first return of the Scherzo, the only middle-movement appearance of the *Ewigkeit* motive occurs in a highly chromaticized and distorted version, now in F minor (mm. 195-98)—the negative polarity of its original guise. In terms of narrative, then, the Scherzo negates the outcome of first movement. Perhaps more accurately, it exposes that victory as false and hollow. The recycling and reworking of first-movement materials indicate that the Scherzo-sections function as new versions of the primary theme materials from before. Darcy goes so far as to argue that the formal parallels between these movements “suggests that the scherzo invites us to understand it as reopening the formal/tonal issues of the first movement—and (most important) *undoing* its ‘unearned’ major-mode conclusion.”¹⁸¹ The encroachment of death remains a constant threat because of its continual transformation. The Trios provide even weaker resistance, recalling the tonal regions of the “Alma theme” but lacking the *Ewigkeit* motive itself. The coda contains no fewer than six iterations of the major-minor seal, ending in A minor and solidifying its tragic implications.

III. Andante moderato

The Andante strikes an altogether different tone, a reprieve in the far-away tonality of E-flat major. This relates the entire movement to the interpolation found in the development section of the first movement. As observed, the *pastoral* interlude played an important role in the positive outcome of the movement (however tenuous). Likewise, this slow movement also

¹⁸¹ Darcy, “Rotational Form, Teleological Genesis, and Fantasy-Projection in the Slow Movement of Mahler’s Sixth Symphony,” 53.

evokes Nature, particularly with the return of the cowbells. This makes the complete absence of the *Ewigkeit* motive all the more shocking, especially considering its typical association with the *pastoral*. In his excellent analysis, Darcy demonstrates that the movement's form, even with its E-flat major ending, signals the symphony's tragic outcome. He perceives a rotational form at work in which "two maximally contrasting thematic blocks (A and B) are rotated four times. The final rotation achieves a synthesis of the two blocks. This synthesis represents the telos of the movement."¹⁸² While the emotional effect of the music seems positive—Del Mar considers this movement "a welcome and undisturbed respite"—Darcy points out that "[e]ach rotation except the last presents thematic-block A in the major mode followed by thematic-block B in the minor mode. Thus in purely modal terms each rotation revisits the idea of major collapsing to minor, the *Urmotif* of the entire symphony."¹⁸³

Darcy identifies two interpolated sections within the rotational structure—"fantasy-projections"—and they carry significant weight in the narrative. The first in E major and the second in A major "together . . . articulate a dominant-tonic progression in A major."¹⁸⁴ The first of the two interpolations begins at measure 84, and as Darcy describes, "[w]ith its horn fanfares and impressionistic scoring (including cowbells, harp, and celesta), this passage provides a classic instance of a 'Durchbruch' or 'breakthrough.'"¹⁸⁵ He continues, "[t]he intended effect here certainly seems to be that of a suspended 'vision of paradise,' especially since the key of E major suggests the similar 'celestial visions' in the last two movements of the Fourth Symphony.

¹⁸² Darcy, "Rotational Form, Teleological Genesis, and Fantasy-Projection in the Slow Movement of Mahler's Sixth Symphony," 52.

¹⁸³ Del Mar, "Mahler's Sixth Symphony," 45; Darcy, "Rotational Form, Teleological Genesis, and Fantasy-Projection in the Slow Movement of Mahler's Sixth Symphony," 54.

¹⁸⁴ Darcy, "Rotational Form, Teleological Genesis, and Fantasy-Projection in the Slow Movement of Mahler's Sixth Symphony," 54.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

But here, as a conscious illusion, a mere fantasy, it is foreordained to collapse, which it does through a striking chromatic disintegration.”¹⁸⁶ This speaks of another *collapse-as-closure* example that serves as a hallmark of the middle period in general but particularly characterizes the Sixth. The second “fantasy-projection” begins at measure 115 in C major, quickly moving to A major and completing the dominant-tonic progression. This proves highly significant: “[i]n this context, A major functions as the ultimate symbol of potential positivity—the sonority of a hoped-for *Erlösung*—but within this E-flat movement it is perceptible only as its tonal counterpole.”¹⁸⁷ And yet, once again A major gives way to A minor with the B-block’s third return in measure 139.

The music aspires toward positive closure with a climax at measure 173, synthesizing the A and B blocks in E-flat major. But the desired E-flat PAC never materializes: “[t]his crumbling-away of the long-awaited PAC as well as its replacement by a plagal cadence is to be understood as a final negative signal. Not only is a lasting redemptive space (A major) unattainable, but even the more limited comforts of E-flat major are subject to decay.”¹⁸⁸ The movement does indeed end in E-flat major, but the seed of doubt, nevertheless, is planted through the denial of a satisfactory PAC. The deliverance from death seen in the first movement no long seems viable, considering the alienation of the *Ewigkeit* motive from Nature. Thus, Mahler sets the table for the dark conclusion of the work.

¹⁸⁶ Darcy, “Rotational Form, Teleological Genesis, and Fantasy-Projection in the Slow Movement of Mahler’s Sixth Symphony,” 63-67.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

Movement 4: The Failure of *Ewigkeit*

For the last movement, I will primarily focus on the role of the *Ewigkeit* motive, leaving more in-depth formal considerations to other analyses. Monahan's recent analysis provides a compelling explanation of this gigantic formal design, and my investigation will draw from his insights. He views the Finale as intimately connected with the first movement: "there is—even for Mahler—an especially strong sense of continuity between the framing movements, with the Finale seeming to wrap up a story set in motion in the symphony's opening bars."¹⁸⁹ Even further, he argues, "[the Finale's] special menace is that it erases or 'writes over' the Allegro and its tonic-major ending altogether."¹⁹⁰ Thus, the Sixth's Finale serves as both an extension and repudiation of the first movement. As one might expect, the *Ewigkeit* motive plays an important role in this narrative. The Finale's giant structure "for all its ostentatious complexity . . . is almost obsessively preoccupied with the tonal/cadential drama of the Enlightenment sonata. Nowhere in Mahler is the secondary theme's generic drive for closure more intensely wrought than here."¹⁹¹ If the secondary theme, once again, plays an integral role in the outcome of the sonata plot, does this also mean that the P- and S-themes of the Finale carry the same expressive associations as before? Both movements contain strikingly similar P-themes (A minor tonality, *march* topic, aggressive motivic transformation), and S, on the other hand, provides another maximal contrast to P with a lyrical theme that includes the *Ewigkeit* motive. Monahan identifies S as consisting of two parts: "S-space in fact contains two distinct themes: a buoyant but restrained S1 and an over-the-top S2 that expressly channels the ecstatic *Schwung* of the Allegro's 'Alma theme.' Despite differences in character, the two themes share a common

¹⁸⁹ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 98.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 223.

purpose—to secure the secondary key of D major—as well as a common fate: both are cut short before being able to do so.”¹⁹² Both S1 and S2 reference the *Ewigkeit* motive, although only S2 captures the character of the “Alma theme,” but their shared tonal goal, according to Monahan, drives the entire structure of the movement.

Under the rubric of an “Epic” sonata type—one that Monahan identified in the Third Symphony’s first movement—the Finale contains a relatively straightforward sonata-form outline, augmented by large-scale introductory and free-developmental sections. Floros notes that, in these prefatory areas, Mahler utilizes “an almost impressionistic technique of suggestion. A comparison of these passages with the actual exposition, development, and recapitulation confirms what an initial hearing may have suggested; namely, the music operates on two basically different levels. One is unreal, dreamlike and far removed; the other is in the foreground and real.”¹⁹³ Monahan explains this further:

The piece divides into four “blocks” corresponding to the four sections of the traditional sonata, each beginning with the “introductory complex” (labeled “I”), a brief but highly characteristic formal marker (mm. 1-16). In each case, the introductory complex gives way to what I call “dissolution fields,” spaces characterized by ethereal *pianissimo* textures, fragmented motivic play, tonal instability, and an overall lack of symphonic impetus. In the expositional block, this field is the starting point for an extended generative process (mm. 16-113) in which the movement’s main themes emerge from the ether and gradually gain the momentum necessary to launch the sonata.¹⁹⁴

The Finale opens in C minor, and a haunting theme for the violins containing the motive rises over eerie string tremolos.¹⁹⁵ As this theme descends, Mahler suddenly modulates to A minor in conjunction with the Symphony’s motto: the major-minor seal and the “rhythm of catastrophe,” acting as a microcosm for the entire drama about to unfold. The dissolution field that follows

¹⁹² Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 231-33.

¹⁹³ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 181.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁹⁵ A compelling argument in favor of the original middle-movement order is the relative-minor relationship between the Finale’s opening bars and the E-flat major conclusion of the Andante.

(and its subsequent reappearances) resembles the interpolation from the first movement's development (particularly mm. 196-216). Brown suggests, "[i]t is significant that the means of recollection is not only quotation but also faint allusions to previous materials," which certainly characterizes this expansion of the free-floating interpolation from before.¹⁹⁶ Here, P and S1 elements begin to emerge, including another appearance of the *Ewigkeit* motive. At measure 30, S1 presents itself as an optimistic, martial alternative to the P-motives. The dotted rhythms and fanfare gestures indicate that the "Alma theme" retains its militaristic transformation from the first movement's coda. S1 borrows considerably from P, leading Monahan to observe, "[l]ike many of the Finale's failures, the subjugation of S1 is all the more tragic for our sense that the game had been rigged, that its autonomy had been illusory and thus its failure unavoidable—even foreseeable in advance."¹⁹⁷ The *Ewigkeit* motive crops up as part of S1's (futile) resistance.

Example 3.26: Symphony No. 6/IV, mm. 30-37



This section briefly tonicizes E major—a key Mahler often reserved for his most transcendent music—and this suddenly becomes undercut in measure 39. Monahan views this dissolution field as a struggle between chaos and order. The chaos sections constitute areas of free-floating motivic activity, and the order sections attempt to mobilize the music in the form of chorales.

¹⁹⁶ Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire*, vol. 4, 662.

¹⁹⁷ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 223.

The back-and-forth between discourses reaches a climactic point in measures 95-97 when, following an order-seeking chorale, a crashing cadence in C major slips, as expected, into C minor. Most tragically, this moment features what one might call an aborted *Ewigkeit* gesture (mm. 95-96, presenting *x*, but denying *y* and *z*). This begins the transition into the Exposition proper.

The primary theme unfolds as expected, and while T offers potential redemption in C major with a PAC in measure 157, this optimism quickly dissolves when A minor takes hold once again: “[I]ike its ancestor in 6/I, this TR has been a ‘transition’ to nowhere. The primary theme, in the tonic key, has had the last word.”¹⁹⁸ The secondary section begins in D major with S1, but this time, S2 bursts in at measure 205 with a sweeping lyricism that recovers the character of the “Alma theme.” The *Ewigkeit* motive, in this context, provides an even more definitive example of the *x*, *y*, and *z* paradigm, resembling the “Alma” prototype more closely than S1.

Example 3.27: Symphony No. 6/IV, mm. 209-11



In this way, S2 represents a full manifestation of the hoped-for redemption as embodied in Alma. And, once again, the associations of the *Ewigkeit* motive become tied to the functions of a sonata

¹⁹⁸ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 234.

movement's secondary-theme obligations. The success or failure of this theme carries with it the possibility of salvation itself. Unlike the first movement, the Finale's S-themes fail to achieve proper closure through an EEC. Instead, TR material suddenly interrupts at measure 217, and the music collapses into the development at measure 229.

The development opens the proper dramatic stage of the movement, containing the two hammer-blows (the third, later omitted in Mahler's revision, occurred during the Recapitulation) and two sections that Monahan calls "Utopian Visions." It begins in D minor, directly reflecting the failure of the S-themes to achieve a D-major cadence. As before, it begins with introductory and dissolution-field sections prior to the main part of the development. The *Ewigkeit* motive only appears in two fleeting instances despite the reappearance of contexts in which it initially occurred. The dissolution field—now including cowbells and solidifying its connection to the first movement's *pastoral* interpolation and the Andante—does not include a reference to the motive, even with the return of S1 (m. 250 ff.). It does briefly emerge during a substantial return of S2 in D major (mm. 307-8), almost as if, in Monahan's view, the exposition only temporarily stalled out and now may continue toward the previously-denied cadence.¹⁹⁹ Of course, closure is denied by the first hammer-blow (m. 336). The first of the "Utopian Visions" comes unexpectedly in A major (m. 364) and consists primarily of S1.²⁰⁰ Without cadencing, the vision collapses, leading to what Monahan calls the Development proper (m. 385). This section begins developing P-motives and includes one of the few references to the *Ewigkeit* motive in the Development (mm. 429-30). It subtly emerges from the low woodwinds (mm. 464-66) during the second A-major "Utopian Vision" (mm. 458-78), which now includes S2 material. In a dramatic

¹⁹⁹ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 242.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

reordering of events, this vision leads to the second hammer-blow, which culminates in the end of the development.

In terms of *Ewigkeit* motive appearances, the recapitulation does not stray too far from the Exposition, at least at first.²⁰¹ But a dramatic *chorale* in B-flat major (mm. 600-9) indicates a concerted attempt to achieve the redemption denied thus far. An A-major passage (mm. 612-41) contains unambiguous *Ewigkeit* motive references, first in the trombones (mm. 630-31) and echoed in the trumpets (mm. 632-33). Simultaneously, this section includes a two-fold statement of the “rhythm of catastrophe” in the timpani shortly before those *Ewigkeit* occurrences and, ultimately, collapses into A minor for the start of the recapitulation proper (m. 642). The primary theme returns in A minor, unimpeded by the various attempts at *Durchbruch*. A conflation of T and S1, including the *Ewigkeit* motive (mm. 675-76), occurs with ever-increasing desperation. Suddenly, the moment of potential *Durchbruch* manifests with the return of the S-theme, more specifically S2, in the optimally redemptive key of A major. Monahan explains, “[a]fter the self-negating tumult that preceded, this luminous affirmation space would have us believe that the sonata has cast off the burden of the minor mode once and for all.”²⁰² At measure 744, S2 modulates to F major, the key associated with the “Alma theme,” and in measures 749-50, the motive sounds in the horns and trumpets. Soon after, the F-major music begins to collapse, modulating back to A major once more, and layered on top of the S2-theme and the *Ewigkeit* motive’s most expressive *y*-leap thus far (an entire octave), the “rhythm of catastrophe” drowns out this potential redemption.

²⁰¹ This includes the intro-music example at mm. 526-27 and examples in conjunction with S1’s appearances in the dissolution-space at mm. 579-80, mm. 581-82, and mm. 583-84.

²⁰² Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 248.

Despite a last attempt to cadence in A major (m. 765 ff.), the ultimate denial takes place at measure 774 when the introductory music resumes once more, averting the A-major cadence. Originally, the third hammer-blow (m. 784 before Mahler's later deletion) occurred immediately following this last return of the introductory theme, complete with the Symphony's motto. The remainder of the Finale serves as a funereal postlude, solemn and quiet, until the motto blares out one last time and fades into silence. Monahan views the structural/tonal and narrative elements as expressive of the battle between freedom and subjugation:

Negativity in this reading is not the destruction of some programmatic hero but an exercise of power run rampant, a hyperbolized classicism in which coherence becomes a damaging condition, one that liquidates individual impulses [represented by S1 and S2] according to the whims of a voracious collective. In such a view, it is no coincidence that Mahler's most procedurally traditional symphony is also the bleakest in expression.²⁰³

Actually, one can reasonably see it as both: the destruction of a heroic protagonist due to the uncaring cruelty of a deterministic universe.

Conclusion: The Sixth Symphony and Mahler's Worldview

What does this work tell us about Mahler's worldview? And how does the *Ewigkeit* motive communicate this as a musical symbol? I will attempt a few answers. The symphony, as a whole, questions and openly confronts the narrative of the Fifth Symphony. It addresses the fact that, if Love, as embodied by Mahler's relationship with Alma, fails to overcome the forces of malevolence, it will result in personal and metaphysical death. In this sense, the Sixth does cohere with the philosophical insights of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. As Hefling argues, "[f]or Schopenhauer, tragedy teaches withdrawal from the world. For Nietzsche, life is to be fully embraced in all its weal and woe."²⁰⁴ With Monahan's insight into their strained relationship

²⁰³ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 221.

²⁰⁴ Hefling, "Song and Symphony (II). From *Wunderhorn* to Rückert and the middle-period symphonies," 122.

during composition on the Sixth, it seems Mahler—again, perhaps even unconsciously—needed to contend with the very real possibility that his relationship with Alma might fail. If one needs evidence that the potential break-down of their marriage would traumatize Mahler, one merely needs to observe how, years later in 1910, his discovery of her affair with Walter Gropius affected him. In Fischer’s words:

Normally his eyes remained dry, but now he could not stop crying. The doors between their separate bedrooms were now left open so that he could hear the sound of his wife’s breathing. Or he would appear like a ghost at her bedside, causing her to start up in alarm. More than once he lay on the floor of his composing hut, crying—this was how Alma found him when she went to fetch him for lunch. On one occasion he fainted.

. . . Mahler’s notes and poems for Alma are our most accurate reflection of the events of this period. The picture that we can see in this mirror comes perilously close to a case of personality dissociation.²⁰⁵

Alma embodied not only his personal feelings of love but his metaphysical beliefs about Love itself, and the difficulties of their relationship during this period apparently caused him to question everything, even down to his core conceptions of reality. Ricoeur speaks of how a narrative work “opens the kingdom of the ‘as if.’”²⁰⁶ Thus, within the (relative) safety of artistic creation, Mahler directly confronts the world “as if” all his preconceptions proved false.

But why does the *Ewigkeit* motive-as-Alma fail? Summarizing the narrative of the Sixth on the broadest level, in the first movement, Alma, and the love she represents, triumphs unexpectedly over encroaching death. This occurs because she embraces the power of Nature (one of the *Ewigkeit* motive’s typical associations) and transforms her innate character into a militaristic guise.²⁰⁷ In the Scherzo, this triumph reveals itself as temporary, and the force of death continues to transform itself. It even destroys the potentially positive/redemptive Trio-

²⁰⁵ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 638-9.

²⁰⁶ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 64.

²⁰⁷ One could interpret this several ways: perhaps it suggests Alma’s mortality (taking on elements of the death-march), or similarly to Monahan’s view, it demonstrates how marriage to Mahler nullified certain aspects of her character, which attracted him to her in the first place.

materials by the end. The absence of the *Ewigkeit* motive indicates its alienation and inability to appear in varied contexts. This pertains most significantly to the Andante, a *pastoral* escape both transplanted and expanded from the interpolation of the first movement. The *Ewigkeit* motive, despite its frequent association with Nature, does not appear. In the Finale, the alienation of Alma from the other important associations creates a situation in which the *Ewigkeit* motive cannot break out of its deterministic sonata-form structure. In other words, if salvation depends on Alma (the *Ewigkeit* motive stripped of its full range of meaning) and nothing else, she will fail to deliver it.

Even if one remains unconvinced by this personal-autobiographical interpretation, the structure of worldview allows for this narrative framework to permeate all possible levels, autobiographical and universal. One could feasibly interpret this symphony in purely philosophical terms as a conflict with Death and the failure of romantic love to transcend that tragic reality. Given Mahler's insistence on the connection between the cosmic and the personal—a topic addressed in greater detail in the following chapter—one need not choose one over the other. Rather, as Kangas suggests, both interpretations form part of the unfolding world of the text.²⁰⁸

As for what the Sixth signifies for Mahler's worldview, first, it demonstrates his uneasiness about the positive conclusion of the Fifth. One might call it an acknowledgement of the Fifth's narrative convenience—a Finale too dependent upon forgetting the tragedy of the past. Second, it suggests the kind of religious/philosophical struggle present within so many of Mahler's Symphonies at the highest level, that is, between entire works, denying easy answers and expressing serious doubts. And third, while it does not seem that Mahler's worldview

²⁰⁸ Kangas, "Remembering Mahler," 14.

fundamentally changed, the Sixth provides a keen insight, perhaps one Mahler himself did not realize until completing the work: the Fifth Symphony's narrative of salvation-through-Alma reveals itself as naïve or, at least, incomplete, demanding a more tenable solution. This, in fact, constitutes the essence of the struggle present in the Seventh Symphony, which, as we will observe in the following chapter, attempts a solution to this very problem.

CHAPTER FOUR

Symphonic Synecdoche: Mahler's Seventh and the Nature of the Symphony

The final phase of worldview, likewise of this investigation, turns toward ways of being and doing that emerge directly from the implications latent in the narratives and truth-claims that precede them. Ultimately, worldviews will manifest themselves in real-world actions that relate to an underlying value-structure. While one can certainly operate outside the bounds of such values, these structures undoubtedly influence behavior to a significant degree by creating a direct link between local action at a given moment, a regulating behavioral principle applicable across time, presuppositions about the nature of reality from which such a principle might emerge, and an over-arching narrative that grasps together these elements into a comprehensible whole. Chapter One briefly touched on the idea that “values” may refer either to ethical or aesthetic concerns. This final study will focus primarily on the ways in which an examination of Mahler’s compositional process and the unique expressive features of Seventh Symphony reveals aesthetic values that relate to his worldview. Gradually, however, the course of this investigation will reveal the connection between these aesthetic principles and a specific ethical aim that the Seventh, as the completion of a symphonic trilogy, seeks to fulfill.

One of Mahler’s most famous and frequently quoted utterances forms the cornerstone of this study as a far-reaching aesthetic imperative, one that subsumes all other aesthetic values into a singular idea. In October 1907, Mahler conducted a series of concerts in St. Petersburg, which included a brief trip to Helsinki between performances. During this interval, he met with Jean

Sibelius several times, and in one of their conversations, the composers discussed their views on the symphony. Sibelius related the conversation to his biographer Karl Ekman, stating:

We grew close during a number of walks when we talked about all kinds of musical problems, of life and of death. When our conversation touched on the nature of the symphony, I said that I admired its style and severity of form, and the profound logic that created an inner connection between all the motives. This was my experience in the course of my creative work. Mahler's opinion was just the opposite. "No!" he said, "the symphony must be like the world. It must be all-embracing."¹

Although this quotation is well-known, it does not frequently prompt further investigation into what, precisely, Mahler meant. One could point to the obvious fact that Mahler's symphonies, compared with those of Sibelius, exemplify an expansive vision of symphonic form, featuring an immense variety of motives, themes, topics, genre-conventions, and moods. Guy Rickards makes this point when, in his discussion of this meeting, he argues, "[n]owhere is their fundamental difference of approach encapsulated more dramatically than in the two symphonies that they had completed that very year: Sibelius's half-hour-long Third, a model of Classicist restraint, Mahler's Eighth a vast and unwieldy excrescence of late Romanticism three times as long, requiring eight or nine times the number of performers."² This observation, however, does not explain the forcefulness of Mahler's remark. Consider the double use of the word "must." Why *must* the symphony "be like the world?" To understand this aesthetic imperative on a deeper level, one must do so in relation to Mahler's entire creative outlook.

This final case study will answer this question in several stages: (1) a discussion of the claim that aesthetic values arise from worldview structures; (2) a detailed description and analysis of Mahler's creative process, including the known facts of the Seventh's compositional development; (3) an analysis of the Seventh as a large-scale "recomposition" of the Fifth and

¹ Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 3, *Vienna: Triumph and Disillusion (1904-1907)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 753.

² Guy Rickards, *Jean Sibelius* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997), 96.

Sixth; and (4) a description of the ways Mahler's aesthetic functions as an outward manifestation of his worldview. Whereas the preceding chapters moved directly from an analysis of the text to an interpretation—before invoking biographical or other extra-musical aids—this chapter will, by necessity, draw from the insights of the previous chapters and the analysis of Mahler's compositional process in order to explore the manifestation of aesthetic values in the Seventh. While this will result in a certain amount of interpretive “reading-in” (*eisegesis*) regarding the Seventh, I argue that this is warranted by the Seventh's position in relationship to the previous two symphonies.

Worldviews consist fundamentally of narratives, and narratives themselves primarily concern the imitation (mimesis) of actions by agents. This led Ricoeur to observe, “actions can be estimated or evaluated, that is, judged according to a scale of moral preferences.”³ The reception of that narrative may lead its refiguration as real-world modes of being (mimesis₃). Similarly, aesthetic values arise out of the process of three-fold mimesis through the common mental faculty of judgment. Kant explores this subject in considerable depth in his *Critique of Judgment*, defining judgment as “the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the Universal.”⁴ This opens the door to subjectivity. Copleston explains:

[Aesthetic judgment] is purely subjective, not in the sense that there is no universal claim in the judgment (for there is), but in the sense that it is a judgment about the accordance of the form of an object, whether a natural object or a work of art, with the cognitive faculties on the basis of the feeling caused by the representation of the object and not with reference to any concept.⁵

³ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 57.

⁴ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2000), 16.

⁵ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 6, *Modern Philosophy: From the French Enlightenment to Kant* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 354.

As opposed to a “determinant judgment” (in which a universal concept subsumes a particular), Kant names this type of aesthetic judgment “reflective,” which occurs when “the particular be given for which the universal has to be found.”⁶ Terry Pinkard explains:

The experience of the beautiful thus involves the imagination, although in a crucially mediated way. Although the intellect is governed by the concepts (the rules) necessary for the possibility of experience, the imagination is free to combine the matters of experience according to its own plan. When, however, the imagination constructs a unity of experience that, although not guided by a concept (a rule), is nonetheless in harmony with the kinds of conceptual judgments produced by the intellect (as guided by rules), *and* this harmony is itself spontaneously produced without any rule to guide it, then one has the possibility of an apprehension of the beautiful. Such harmonious free play, however, is not itself directly experienced (at least in the same way in which a feeling of agreeableness or pleasure is directly experienced); it is by an act of attending to it, of *reflective judgment*, that the agent apprehends the harmony.⁷

Although not entirely equivalent terms, one may substitute “imagination”—with its freedom to “combine the matters of experience according to its own plan” (synthesis) and construct “a unity of experience” (interpretation)—with worldview. Perhaps more precisely, the imagination serves as one of the ways in which the synthetic-hermeneutic operation of worldview will manifest.

As for the relationship between aesthetic and ethical values, Copleston notes that, in Kant’s thought, “[t]he fact that the judgment of taste rests in some sense on the indeterminate concept of the supersensible substrate of phenomena suggests that there is some link between aesthetics and morals.”⁸ Similarly, Ricoeur argues that “it is part of the very idea of action that it be accessible to *precepts* which, in the form of advice, recommendation, and instruction, teach how to succeed—hence, how to do well—in what one has undertaken. Precepts, to be sure, are

⁶ Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, 16-17.

⁷ Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 70.

⁸ Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 6, 368.

not all moral ones—far from it: they can be technical, strategic, aesthetic, and so on.”⁹ In fact, the two necessarily go together. Ricoeur explains:

Might it be said that the literary narrative, on the level of narrative configuration properly speaking, loses its ethical determinations in exchange for purely aesthetic determinations? This would be to misunderstand aesthetics itself. The pleasure we take in following the fate of the characters implies, to be sure, that we suspend all real moral judgment at the same time that we suspend action itself. But in the unreal sphere of fiction we never tire of exploring new ways of evaluating actions and characters. The thought experiments we conduct in the great laboratory of the imaginary are also explorations in the realm of good and evil. Transvaluing, even devaluing, is still evaluating. Moral judgment has not been abolished; it is rather itself subjected to the imaginative variations proper to fiction.¹⁰

Therefore, this case study will interrogate the two levels in which the creative artist might express aesthetic/ethical values in a creative work: (1) as real-world actions in the actual process of creation; and (2) as rhetorical/compositional strategies found in the work itself.

MAHLER AS COMPOSER: PURPOSE, INSPIRATION, PROCESS

Either/Or?

Analyses of Mahler’s compositions generally divide into two approaches. The traditional view characterizes these works as extensions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century practice and allows for the application of ready-made formal labels to individual movements. This top-down approach informs the analyses of Floros who, while acknowledging formal abnormalities, argues, “[i]t is quite remarkable that the symphonic works of Mahler have been always viewed up to now as distinct from the symphonic tradition of [the] 19th century. Many researchers considered and still hold them to be historically unprecedented. . . . [T]his point of view bars the

⁹ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 170.

¹⁰ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 164.

way to a proper understanding of Mahler.”¹¹ The other view, to which Floros refers, considers Mahler as a symphonic iconoclast, radically breaking with genre conventions. Adorno articulated the bottom-up view of Mahler’s forms with his notion of the “novel-symphony.” He argues:

The movement of the musical concepts begins from the bottom, as it were, with the facts of experience, transmitting them in the unity of their succession and finally striking from the whole the spark that leaps beyond the facts, instead of composing from above, from an ontology of forms. To this extent Mahler works decisively toward the abolition of tradition. At the bottom of the musical novel form lies an aversion that must have been felt long before Mahler, but that he was the first not to repress. It is an aversion to knowing in advance how music continues.¹²

Therefore, the problem of understanding whether Mahler composed top-down or bottom-up will form a significant aspect of the investigation into his compositional process. Reframing the question, what is the relationship between the part and the whole in Mahler’s music, and how does it apply to Mahler’s notion that the symphony must be like the world? The following attempts an answer to this question as a precursor to a discussion of the Seventh. The scope of this chapter does not include an in-depth examination of Mahler’s sketches and drafts as a means of uncovering new insights into his creative process. Rather, in keeping with the aims of this project, I will summarize the efforts already made by scholars to determine how Mahler’s worldview shaped—and was shaped by—his praxis.

The Role of the Composer and the Function of Art

In the first case study, the investigation of the Fifth Symphony and narrative identity involved discussing Mahler’s conceptual link between suffering and creativity, describing himself as a Christ-like figure, suffering on behalf of humanity. In a conversation with Bauer-Lechner, Mahler employs another biblical metaphor to emphasize this point: “[a] magnificent

¹¹ Floros, *Gustav Mahler and the Symphony of the 19th Century*, 1.

¹² Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, 62.

symbol of the creator is Jacob, wrestling with God until He blesses him. If the Jews had been responsible for nothing but this image, they would still inevitably have grown to be a formidable people—God similarly withholds his blessing from me. I can only extort it from Him in my terrible struggles to bring my works into being.”¹³ Mahler viewed his sufferings as the raw materials from which he could compose, which he extends to the creative act itself. After stating that “the creation of a work of art resembles that of a pearl, which, born of the oyster’s terrible sufferings, bestows its treasure on the world,” he continues, “[i]n this way, spiritual conception is very like physical birth. What struggles, what agony, what terror accompany it—but what rejoicing when the child turns out to be fit and strong!”¹⁴ The metaphor of composition-as-birth occurs numerous times in Mahler’s conversation and letters and demonstrates his view of the creative process as a painful struggle. Regarding the function of art, however, Mahler maintained that “the aim of art, as I see it, must always be the ultimate liberation from and transcendence of sorrow.”¹⁵

The Source of Creativity

Before discussing Mahler’s compositional process on a technical level, his personal views on creative inspiration merit consideration. Contrary to Fischer’s lament that he “had little more to say on the subject [of inspiration] than all the other creative artists of the time,” Mahler’s statements on the matter serve as an interesting counterpoint to the notion of artistic struggle.¹⁶ On one occasion when he was revisiting the Scherzo of his Second, Mahler noted his surprise in finding it much better than he considered it during its composition. This led him to exclaim,

¹³ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 76.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁶ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 449.

“[t]he inception and creation of a work are mystical from beginning to end; unconsciously, as if in the grip of a command from outside oneself, one is compelled to create something whose origin one can scarcely comprehend afterwards.”¹⁷ This statement and others like it point directly toward significant aspects of Mahler’s worldview. By examining a few examples, one can piece together how his view of creative work emerged from his metaphysical beliefs.

Mahler maintained that his compositions never began with a specific intention.

Responding to a request from to compose an opera based on a libretto by his friend Heinrich Krzyzanowski, Mahler wrote, “[s]end me your ideas and plans.—If I am stimulated, I shall joyfully set to work!—You do know I never set out ‘to do something’—sometimes on my zigzag way through life, the threads of which we find incessantly becoming entangled, a sudden impulse throws me on to some course or other. That is when I ‘do something.’”¹⁸ In the letter recounting his inspiration for the Second’s Finale (quoted in Chapter Two), he explains that a musician can hardly explain his nature, arguing “[s]o it is the same with his *aims*! He moves towards them like a sleep-walker—he does not know what road he is taking (perhaps past yawning abysses), but he heads towards the distant light, whether it be the ever-radiant star or a seductive will-o’-the-wisp!”¹⁹ Mahler illustrates this unconscious wandering in reference to the gargantuan dimensions of his Third Symphony:

[P]eople will be sure to say: “What nerve, to think he can palm this off on us! He must have deliberately set out to offer us something still more extravagant than he had in the Second!” If they only knew how little it is a matter of audacity on my part! On the contrary, I am driven to it against my will; I am anything but happy at having to tread this path, because the work unconditionally demands it. . . . It sweeps me along irresistibly. It’s as if the creative surge were breaking through in remorseless spate after being dammed up for so many years. There’s no escaping it!²⁰

¹⁷ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 30-31.

¹⁸ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 137.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 212-13.

²⁰ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 63.

Finally, Mahler definitively connects this notion of compulsory creativity with his views on the true nature of reality. To Marschalk, he confided, “[t]he need to express myself musically—in symphonic terms—begins only on the plane of *obscure* feelings, at the gate that opens into the ‘other world,’ the world in which things no longer fall apart in time and space.”²¹ This remark brings to mind the writings of Hoffmann, particularly the essay “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music,” in which he proclaims that purely instrumental music “is the most romantic of all the arts—one might almost say, the only genuinely romantic one—for its sole subject is the infinite.”²² Mahler greatly admired the writings of Hoffmann, and in a letter to Alma, he revealed that he shared this view of music: “[i]f you were to devote a little of your time to the works of Hoffmann, you would gain entirely new insights into the unique relationship between music—that eternally mysterious, totally unfathomable art which can penetrate like lightning into the deepest recesses of our thoughts and feelings—and reality.”²³

To summarize, Mahler’s views on inspiration and composition contain a number of ideas relevant to understanding his worldview: (1) inspiration comes from outside oneself, beyond rational explanation; (2) inspiration continues to compel the work to progress, however mysteriously, toward its endpoint; and (3) feelings guide composition by opening the door to the infinite. But how does this view of inspiration cohere with Mahler’s other statements regarding artistic struggle? At the intersection of these ideas, seemingly at odds, one observes Mahler putting into practice one of the central concepts expressed in the Fifth Symphony: the necessity of both striving and grace to achieve salvation. In the case of Mahler’s compositions, the

²¹ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 179.

²² E. T. A. Hoffmann, “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music,” in *Source Readings in Music History*, vol. 6, *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ruth A. Solie, trans. Oliver Strunk (New York: Norton, 1998), 151.

²³ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 50.

unearned compulsion toward creativity still requires the tribulations of existence to see the work through to its completion.

The Phases of Mahler's Compositional Process

Based on the existing documents, one can divide Mahler's compositional process into five distinct phases. Edward R. Reilly devised these stages as a means of categorizing the surviving manuscripts. Although his systematic catalogue remains unfinished, a number of scholars adopt his five-phase scheme for their own investigations.²⁴ Zychowicz, in his study of the Fourth Symphony, utilizes Reilly's scheme to describe each phase of composition in the development of the Fourth. The following draws from Zychowicz's insights to provide an analytical description of each compositional phase, which I will correlate with Mahler's own comments as closely as possible for each step. By doing so, I hope to answer partially the question posed at the outset of this chapter (why *must* the symphony be like the world?) by determining whether Mahler's approach to composition fits into a top-down or bottom-up model. Such a determination will illuminate a fundamental aspect of Mahler's views on the relationship of part to whole, both in the work and in the world.

Phase 1: First Ideas

The initial phase of composition breaks down into two components. First, Mahler tended to sketch ideas for potential movements in a new symphonic composition. Zychowicz explains, “[u]pon beginning large-scale works [Mahler] sometimes created lists of movements, often with possible titles, tempo indications, and even keys. . . . Moreover, the plans of movements usually

²⁴ James L. Zychowicz, *Mahler's Fourth Symphony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2.

predate the earliest notated musical ideas for a work, which occur in sketchbooks or in the preliminary sketches.”²⁵ He notes, however, that “[i]t is difficult to ascertain with absolute certainty when these early plans occurred in the composition of a work, since Mahler used them before beginning to compose and also returned to such lists while completing various movements.”²⁶ Very few of these movement-title sketches survive, but the few extant documents that remain reveal Mahler contemplating new works on the broadest possible level. This fact might favor the argument that he primarily composed top-down. Mahler’s description of the Eighth’s inception lends support to this argument. He related to Richard Specht, “it was a vision that struck me like lightning. The whole immediately stood before my eyes; I had only to write it down, as if it had been dictated to me.”²⁷ Of course, a consideration the two surviving movement-title sketches for the Eighth reveals that the completed work only partially resembles these initial ideas.²⁸ In fact, for almost every work for which these documents survive, the end product significantly departs from the initial conception.²⁹

The second component of this first phase involves the earliest sketches for musical ideas. Mahler did not always write down musical ideas as they came to him. Hefling observes that Mahler’s appointment to the Vienna Court Opera—and the subsequent creative drought that came about as a result—forced him to start notating ideas for later use.³⁰ These ideas did not

²⁵ Zychowicz, *Mahler’s Fourth Symphony*, 47.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁷ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 214.

²⁸ John Williamson, “The Eighth Symphony,” in *The Mahler Companion*, ed. Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson, 407-18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 409. Both movement sketches for the Eighth have a four-movement layout (Mahler eventually settled on two “Parts”) and movement titles for ideas that never materialized in the composition.

²⁹ Zychowicz distinguishes the Third Symphony as a rarity in Mahler’s output in that he kept returning to movement-title sketches throughout the entire process of composition. For this reason, the later sketches bear a close resemblance to the completed work. See Zychowicz, *Mahler’s Fourth Symphony*, 47.

³⁰ Stephen E. Hefling, “‘Ihm in die Lieder zu blicken’: Mahler’s Seventh Symphony sketchbook,” in *Mahler Studies*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling, 169-216 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 180-82.

necessarily correspond to active work on a composition. As Fischer explains, “Mahler himself described them as ‘unborn ideas’ that arise when conditions are right and form a kind of primeval soup made up of ideas that cannot be used for the present. Far from being lost, they return at a later date—sometimes years later—just when they happen to be needed.”³¹

Simultaneously, Zychowicz notes that “[w]hile it is logical that sketchbooks should precede preliminary sketches [phase 2], the evidence does not always exist to substantiate this assumption.”³² In other words, these musical ideas could occur to him years in advance of composition, just before intensive work, or during the process of composing. Mahler began using pocket sketchbooks around the time that the middle-period of his creative output began.³³ Only two of these sketchbooks survive: the first primarily contains material pertaining to the Seventh Symphony, and the second contains sketches for the Ninth Symphony as well as unused material.³⁴

Alma describes a typical scene in which ideas would come to Mahler while the two of them went on walks:

[H]e stood still, the sun beat down on his bare head, he took out a small notebook, ruled for music, and wrote and reflected and wrote again, sometimes beating time in the air. This lasted very often for an hour or longer, while I sat on the grass or a tree-trunk without venturing to look at him. If his inspiration pleased him he smiled back at me. He knew that nothing in the world was a greater joy to me. Then we went on or else turned for home if, as often happened, he was eager to get back to his studio with all speed.³⁵

The flashes of inspiration Mahler described may also apply to the level of individual ideas. In fact, documentary evidence from the Third Symphony indicates that Mahler believed that the

³¹ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 450.

³² James L. Zychowicz, “Re-evaluating the Sources of Mahler’s Music,” in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham, 419-36 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 424.

³³ According to Hefling, “By the summer of 1901 . . . Mahler was apparently making at least selective efforts to save up musical capital for the future.” Hefling, “*Ihm in die Lieder zu blicken*,” 182.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 170.

³⁵ Mahler-Werfel, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*, 47.

necessary means of a work's growth toward completion lay within these initial ideas. Bauer-Lechner relates that, after finishing composition of the Third, Mahler presented her some of the initial sketches for the work along with a dedication that read: "[o]n 28 July 1896, a curious thing happened: I was able to present my dear friend Natalie with the seed of a tree that, nevertheless, is now grown to full size—flourishing and blossoming in the open air with a full complement of branches, leaves, and fruit."³⁶ It appears Bauer-Lechner wrote "1893. Steinbach" on one of the sketch pages. Peter Franklin argues that, if accurate, the date on this page signifies "evidence of the real inception-point of the Third Symphony."³⁷ Therefore, both components of the first phase of composition involved work from opposite extremes of top and bottom. Furthermore, regarding the relationship between the part and the whole, Mahler believed that the part potentially contains the whole within itself, like the seed which becomes a tree.

Phase 2: Preliminary Sketches

The second step in the process represents the point at which composition on a work began in earnest. Whereas the short fragments jotted down in a sketchbook might come to use after a significant interval, the preliminary sketches show Mahler actively shaping ideas toward a specific end. Zychowicz points out, however, that this phase in the compositional process "can be difficult to define because of the varying degree of detail that was worked out before the short score."³⁸ Generally, this stage functions as an important transition from the fragmentary toward the continuous:

When Mahler began to compose a symphony, he started with single-page sketches, most likely based on ideas found in sketchbooks. In general, these "preliminary sketches," as they have become known, contain some of the principal ideas Mahler would take into the

³⁶ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 67.

³⁷ Peter Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 44-45.

³⁸ Zychowicz, *Mahler's Fourth Symphony*, 3.

finished work. Preliminary sketches, by their nature, are less continuous than later ones, and they sometimes include Mahler's earliest attempts at some self-contained passages.³⁹

If the sketchbooks of phase 1 represent a collection of raw materials, the sketches in phase two demonstrate an attempt to organize that material while gathering more elements. Zychowicz observes, "it seems that Mahler sometimes returned to the materials to make revisions. Yet some sketches seem to be the result of more spontaneous work rather than formal revision: he may have made adjustments as he went along."⁴⁰ This explains the varying levels of continuity among these sketches: "[p]assages are often continuous for a system or two and then trail off. On the other hand, it is also possible to find passages that continue from one page to another."⁴¹ Before moving on to the next phase, Mahler would order these sketches by numbering the pages and establishing a flow of ideas.⁴²

Mahler references this phase of composition more frequently in correspondence and recorded conversations, sometimes out of practical necessity. On more than one occasion, Mahler went on his summer holiday without taking all of his sketch material with him. During composition of the Third Symphony, Mahler requested that Hermann Behn bring the sketches he left in Hamburg. After receiving the needed manuscripts, Mahler wrote:

You, dear Hermann, have been of enormous assistance, for without the *sketches* I would not have been able to begin. I really am most grateful. You considered those few pages to be insignificant, but for me with my way of sketching they contained virtually all the shoots of the now completely grown tree, and I hope you will feel that your efforts have been appreciated, when you cast an eye over the whole work.⁴³

Again, Mahler employs the metaphor of a growing tree to describe his compositional process.

Whereas phase 1 contains the musical "seeds," the preliminary sketches see development of

³⁹ Zychowicz, *Mahler's Fourth Symphony*, 59.

⁴⁰ Zychowicz, "Re-Evaluating the Sources of Mahler's Music," 424.

⁴¹ Zychowicz, *Mahler's Fourth Symphony*, 60.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴³ Herta Blaukopf, *Mahler's Unknown Letters*, 30.

those seeds into “shoots,” which will eventually become a tree. The potentiality for this growth into the whole already exists within the part. Bauer-Lechner supplements this aspect of Mahler’s compositional practice by noting that, during work on the first movement of the Third Symphony, “as usual [Mahler] filled a pile of sketch-sheets and his pocket music notebooks with a hundred variants of a motif or a modulation, until he has found exactly what he needs and exactly how it is to fit into the whole.”⁴⁴ Returning to the question of top-down versus bottom-up construction, so far the evidence seems to point in both directions. On the one hand, it appears Mahler primarily worked bottom-up from the smallest ideas toward longer and more continuous stretches of music; on the other, there remains a top-down notion of “the whole” lurking in the background of these activities.

Phase 3: Preliminary Drafts (Short Score)

The last part of the preliminary sketch phase allowed for a smooth transition into creating the preliminary draft: “[b]y ordering the material he had previously composed out of sequence he had already moved beyond the preliminary sketch stage. Yet not all the transitions were in place, nor had he completely thought out the structure of the symphony.”⁴⁵ Thus, the short score “represents a continuous draft of the entire movement of a symphony rather than the kind of isolated passage found earlier in the preliminary sketches.”⁴⁶ In addition to shaping the movement form, the preliminary draft served as the point at which Mahler would begin to flesh out his thoughts about the orchestration. Fischer explains:

The short score is a detailed draft on—normally—three to five staves arranged in the same order as the later full score. In other words, the high woodwind and brass are at the top, followed by the lower brass instruments, percussion and strings, with the violins

⁴⁴ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 61.

⁴⁵ Zychowicz, *Mahler’s Fourth Symphony*, 94.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

above the violas, cellos and, finally, the double bass. Mahler's short scores were normally written on four staves, winds, strings and basses each having a different staff. And additional staves would be used in the case of a vocal line. In turn, the short score was the starting point for the full score in which the musical material was fully worked out for the first time.⁴⁷

Additionally, Mahler began to add expressive details, including indications for articulations, phrasing, and tempo.⁴⁸ While creating the preliminary draft, Mahler would revise it as he went along with the insertion of pages (*Einlagen*) that allowed him to adjust the movement's form before moving to the next phase.⁴⁹

Mahler made fewer comments that directly pertain to this phase of composition. One can infer a reference to this phase pertaining to the Third Symphony—a work for which there exists a considerable amount of documentary evidence due to Bauer-Lechner's presence throughout its composition. In the summer of 1896, Mahler completed the Third after finishing its gigantic first movement, which he purposefully composed last. Bauer-Lechner reports that, on 28 June, Mahler completed his sketch of the movement, and one can assume from Mahler's comment that "sketch," in this context, refers to the preliminary draft. After Bauer-Lechner asked him how he could complete such a monumental work, he responded:

I don't know myself—of course, I had the stones to build with, but the whole thing must have suddenly come together like a jigsaw puzzle. For a long time, you try in vain to put the picture together out of the confused heaps of separate pieces. Suddenly, when a few important pieces are grouped together, everything begins to fall into place until—the picture is before you!⁵⁰

Again, this comment reinforces Mahler's ideas about the part and the whole. The idea of a "jigsaw puzzle" that amounts to a "picture" that needs putting together suggests a pre-existing conception of the whole that the pieces must fit. As to the image of "stones," Mahler returned to

⁴⁷ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 451.

⁴⁸ Zychowicz, *Mahler's Fourth Symphony*, 94.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁵⁰ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 60.

this image in another conversation with Bauer-Lechner, stating, “[c]omposing is like playing with bricks, continually making new buildings from the same old stones. But the stones have lain there since one’s youth, which is the only time for gathering and hoarding them. They are all ready and shaped for use from that time.”⁵¹ Taken together, these two statements indicate that Mahler conceived of this phase of composition as both the cultivation of material from earlier phases as well as a return to the well of experience in order to realize the over-arching aim of the work. This statement also implies a conscious engagement in recomposition, which forms an integral aspect of the Seventh Symphony.

Phase Four: Draft Full Scores

In the fourth phase of composition, Mahler refined many of the details present in the short score, added additional expressive directions, created complete musical continuity for each movement, and fully realized the orchestration. Concerning the first movement of the Third, Mahler reported to Bauer-Lechner, “[t]he scoring is going much more smoothly than I had expected, because even in the first sketch I find that I had already thought out the instrumentation.”⁵² Producing a fair copy remained for the final phase of work, but for Mahler, “the completion of the draft score signaled for Mahler the end of what he would deem ‘work’ on a symphony.”⁵³ Thus, when Mahler wrote to friends to inform them of the completion of a new composition, he referred to the conclusion of this stage in the compositional process. As with the short score, Mahler would make revisions as he went. Zychowicz explains, “[h]e sometimes even substituted pages at this stage, and it is common to find alterations in the form of an intermittent

⁵¹ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 131.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵³ Zychowicz, *Mahler’s Fourth Symphony*, 111.

insertion page (often marked ‘Einlage’ and sometimes followed by the manuscript page to which it refers). At times, he might even revise the form of movements.”⁵⁴

At this juncture, the part and whole converge from opposite ends to form the completed work, and while certain details remained for the final phase (along with later revisions)—refinement of orchestration, tempo indications, and expressive markings—these constituted essential but, to a certain extent, ephemeral details. Concerning tempo indications, Mahler told Bauer-Lechner:

All the most important things—the tempo, the total conception and structuring of a work [in performance]—are almost impossible to pin down. For here we are concerned with something living and flowing that can never be the same even twice in succession. That is why metronome markings are inadequate and almost worthless; for unless the work is vulgarly ground out in barrel-organ style, the tempo will already have changed by the end of the second bar. Whether the overall tempo is a degree faster or slower often depends on the mood of the conductor; it may well vary slightly without detriment to the work. What matters is that the whole should be alive, and, within the bounds of this freedom, be built up with irrevocable inevitability.⁵⁵

One observes this attitude in Mahler’s approach to *Retuschen*—“retouches” or “revisions”—of the works of other composers, even those he greatly revered. David Pickett notes, “so extensive are Mahler’s *Retuschen* that for the majority of the works in his repertoire he was obliged to enter his changes into a set of orchestral parts in advance of the rehearsals.”⁵⁶ Pickett suggests that these *Retuschen* (sometimes quite extensive) served “to interpret what he felt to be the intentions of the composers behind the notes they wrote.”⁵⁷ In other words, the essence of a work exists, to a certain extent, apart from the minute details of tempo indications and orchestration. This explains why, despite continued work at the refinement of details, Mahler considered the

⁵⁴ Zychowicz, *Mahler’s Fourth Symphony*, 4.

⁵⁵ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 46.

⁵⁶ David Pickett, “Arrangements and *Retuschen*: Mahler and *Werktreue*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham, 178-99 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 184.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 197-98.

end of this phase the completion of the work, and this sense of completion stems from the fact that, at this juncture, the top (the overall conception of the work) and the bottom (the gradual development of musical ideas) had come together.

Of course, one should note this belief did not prevent Mahler from going to great lengths to achieve textural clarity in his scores, a task that began—but certainly did not end—at this stage of composition. Once again, Mahler utilizes a botanical metaphor to explain this:

The most important thing in composition is clarity of line [*der reine Satz*]⁵⁸—that is, every voice should be an independent melody, just as in the vocal quartet, which should set the standard here. In the string ensemble, texture is transparent enough in its own right. This becomes less and less true as the orchestra grows bigger, but the need for a similar clarity must remain. Just as the plant's most perfect forms, the flower and the thousand branches of the tree, are developed from the pattern of the simple leaf—just as the human head is nothing but a vertebra—so must the laws of pure vocal polyphony [*der reinen Führung des Vokalsatzes*] be observed even in the most complex orchestral texture.⁵⁸

Blaukopf provides an editorial note describing this passage, stating that the reference to the leaf and tree “surely derived from Goethe’s *The Metamorphosis of Plants* (botanical treatise, 1790; expository poem of the same name, 1798).”⁵⁹ Mahler likely knew both treatise and poem, and an examination of Goethe’s thought on this matter corroborates Blaukopf’s connection. In the treatise, Goethe describes the process of plant development: “[r]egular metamorphosis may also be called *progressive* metamorphosis: it can be seen to work step by step from the first seed leaves to the last formation of the fruit. By changing one form into another, it ascends—as on a spiritual ladder—to the pinnacle of nature: propagation through two genders.”⁶⁰ He describes the development of plants as conforming to a common structure, observable at each stage and present from the outset. Summarizing his argument, Goethe states, “I tried to make as clear as

⁵⁸ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 75. One may perhaps translate “*der reine Satz*” as “purity of line,” which reflects Mahler’s contention that each melodic voice exists as a distinct entity.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁶⁰ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe: The Collected Works*, vol. 12, *Scientific Studies*, ed. and trans. Douglas Miller (New York: Suhrkamp, 1988), 76.

possible that the various plant parts developed in sequence are intrinsically identical despite their manifold differences in outer form.”⁶¹ Thus, the metaphor is complete. To summarize Mahler’s views, composing a musical work resembles the development of plant life in its various stages: (1) the initial ideas of a musical work, like seeds, contain the whole structure within themselves, awaiting realization of their potential; (2) the cultivation of those musical seeds produces shoots in the form of motives and themes, which Mahler worked-out in variations branching out in numerous directions; and (3) the entire musical structure—the leaves and fruit of the tree—grows from these shoots while, simultaneously, always reflecting their pattern at every level of complexity. In this way, Mahler demonstrates how an aesthetic value—the symphony must be like the world—refers not only to a work’s content but also to the process of its creation.

Phase Five: Autograph Score (and Later Revisions)

The final phase of composition does not require substantial comment. In general, Mahler attended to the aforementioned details of the score. According to Zychowicz, “[w]hile he might change the substance of the symphony at this point, such revision was rarer than the attention he gave to the details of scoring, dynamics, and other expressive elements, which he applied more consistently at this stage of composition.”⁶² This process did not necessarily stop at the creation of the autograph. Mahler frequently revised his scores after their initial publication. Frequently, he made changes in response to live performances in pursuit of greater clarity in the orchestration. The case of the Fifth Symphony proves particularly instructive. In one of Mahler’s last known letters, written a nearly a decade after his completion of the Fifth, he confessed, “I have finished my Fifth—it had to be almost completely re-orchestrated. I simply can’t

⁶¹ Goethe, *Scientific Studies*, 88.

⁶² Zychowicz, *Mahler’s Fourth Symphony*, 140.

understand why I still had to make such mistakes, like the merest beginner.”⁶³ This clearly marks the separation, in Mahler’s mind, between the fourth and fifth phase of composition. The work exists apart from its details, which might vary over the course of time.

Preliminary Conclusions

If actions arise from worldview, then Mahler’s attitude toward and method of composition should reflect his beliefs. What, then, do these practices and comments signify? More specifically, can one characterize this practice as primarily top-down or bottom-up? Answering this question requires a delineation of what each of these options mean. The bottom-up approach, in Mahler’s estimation, reflects a mechanical understanding of the natural processes of the world. Taken alone, one might describe this view as materialistic in the way the composition gradually grows in complexity from simpler elements, traceable to a primeval source. Mahler expressed this sentiment to Bauer-Lechner, exclaiming, “[i]n my writing, from the very first, you won’t find any more repetition from strophe to strophe; for music is governed by the law of eternal evolution, eternal development—just as the world, even in one and the same spot, is always changing, eternally fresh and new.”⁶⁴ On the other hand, Mahler clearly also held a top-down view of composition, particularly in regard to moments of inspiration in which a view of the whole precedes any evolutionary process. This betrays a distinctly theistic outlook: “[l]et no one imagine that a really significant artistic thought ever fell into anyone’s lap by chance! If anything, invention is a sign of Divine Grace.”⁶⁵ Mahler states this even more plainly when he claims that the ability to create “is and always will be a gift of God—one that, like

⁶³ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 372.

⁶⁴ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 130.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 136.

every loving gift, one cannot deserve and cannot get by asking.”⁶⁶ Ultimately, the answer to this question comes down to Mahler’s views concerning the relationship of the part to the whole.

To clarify, I do not suggest that every composer views their work in these terms. Because of the limited number of possible ways to compose, one can imagine a myriad of composers adopting a bottom-up or top-down approach without it necessarily signifying the totality of their metaphysical conception of the world (although if one can reconstruct that conception it may, in fact, observably manifest it in some way). But in Mahler’s case, because of his expressed belief that the symphony *must* be like the world, the supposition that his process reflects his worldview forms a logical extension of this fundamental aesthetic conceit. Therefore, for Mahler, the part and whole remain virtually indistinguishable. While some of the earliest work on his symphonies took the form of potential arrangements of movements and their programmatic titles, formal types, and keys, Mahler then left the larger structural ideas behind and concerned himself with the minute details of the musical ideas as they came to him. At every stage, despite the overall movement toward successively greater degrees of continuity and comprehensiveness, Mahler’s work does not proceed in an exclusively Darwinian manner. Instead, each stage represents another phase in which the individual part informs the conception of the whole and vice versa. The earliest sketches showcase various levels of detail along with pre-conceived notions of multi-movement cohesion, ready to be realized. At the same time, one can hardly defend the notion of an entirely top-down hierarchical structure because, at various points, the details appear to shift the broader conception as they emerge at the local level. Thus, Mahler’s compositional process reveals that the tension between the part and the whole exists throughout the entire process of creation. Each step forward on the micro level impacts the overall shape of the work.

⁶⁶ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 242.

Simultaneously, the macro-level conception governs the approach to those details. Both levels engage in a kind of symphonic dance, one giving way to the other at certain points, until the work arrives at its completion.

Mahler makes this distinction himself by contrasting his methods with those other composers. These comparisons suggest that Mahler viewed his compositional practice as a mediation between top-down and bottom-up approaches, which also constitutes a mediation between differing worldviews. During the summer of 1904 (consequently, the same summer that Mahler completed the Sixth Symphony and began the Seventh), he wrote to Alma several times to inform her that he was working his way through the chamber music of Brahms. On 26 June, he reported, “I’ve read through almost all of Brahms. What a puny figure he cuts, and how narrow minded. . . . Brahms must have turned every penny in his pocket of ideas twice over, just to scrape by!”⁶⁷ Despite favorable comments regarding his musical organicism and thematic development, Mahler believed Brahms pushed too far in this direction. As he informed Bauer-Lechner, “[i]t’s no use playing around with some poor little scrap of a theme, varying it and writing fugues on it—anything to make it last out a movement! I can’t stand the economical way of going about things [das Sparsystem]; everything must be overflowing, gushing forth continually, if the work is to amount to anything.”⁶⁸ Interestingly, Mahler seems to connect this dim view of Brahms’s technique with his spiritual significance:

Brahms is not concerned with breaking all bonds and rising above the grief and life of this earth to soar up into the heights of other, freer and more radiant spheres. However profoundly, however intimately and idiosyncratically he handles his material, he remains imprisoned in this world and this life, and never attains the view from the summit. Therefore, his works can never, and will never, exercise the highest, ultimate influence.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 163-64.

⁶⁸ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 29.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 142-43.

And yet Mahler expressed reservations about the opposite tendency. On 3 July 1904, Mahler wrote to Alma, informing her, “[h]aving worked through all of Brahms, I returned to Bruckner. A curiously mediocre figure.—The one spent too long ‘in the ladle,’ the other was in need of that very treatment.”⁷⁰ Mahler sympathized with Bruckner’s dogmatic spirituality, but he also regarded it as part of “his simplicity of nature.”⁷¹ Thus, in an argument with his brother Otto, he maintained, “[w]ith Bruckner, certainly, you are carried away by the magnificence and wealth of his inventiveness, but at the same time you are repeatedly disturbed by its fragmentary character, which breaks the spell”; because of this, Mahler noted, “it isn’t enough to judge a work of art by its content; we must consider its total image, in which content and form are indissolubly blended. It is this which determines its value, its power of survival, and its immortality.”⁷²

Despite the uncharitable readings of both composers, Mahler makes a clear point: the work must strike the perfect balance between the part and the whole. Of course, this pertains to the work in its details (parts) and overall conception (whole), but as the discussion of Brahms and Bruckner demonstrations, Mahler also shifts the balance to a more philosophical level. In this sense, the symphony must balance the part as *form*—the particular manifestation of its ideas; the purely material elements of composition—and the whole as *content*—the transcendent concepts it communicates: its spiritual significance. This sheds light on what Mahler meant by an all-embracing symphony: it must be material and immaterial; logically developed and flowing freely; born out of suffering yet transcending it. The symphony must be like Nature. On yet another level of consideration, the symphony stands in relation to Nature as a part to the whole. In other words, the symphony functions as a synecdoche for Nature, a part that signifies the

⁷⁰ La Grange and Weiss, eds., *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 168.

⁷¹ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 48.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 37.

whole. It is important to note that Mahler held a view of Nature as a singular entity with two aspects. On the one hand, the symphony must be like Nature because Nature is the basis of all our experience: “[w]e probably derive all our basic rhythms and themes [*Urrhythmen und -themen*] from Nature, which offers them to us, pregnant with meaning, in every animal noise. Indeed, Man, and the artist in particular, takes all his materials and all his forms from the world around him—transforming and expanding them, of course.”⁷³ On the other hand, Nature also refers to a super-sensuous world, beyond the realm of appearances:

How can people forever think . . . that Nature lies on the surface! Of course it does, in its most superficial aspect. But those, in the face of Nature, are not overwhelmed with awe at its infinite mystery, its divinity (we can only sense it, not comprehend or penetrate it)—these people have not come close to it. . . . And in every work of art, which should be a reflection [*Abbild*] of Nature, there must be a trace of this infinity.⁷⁴

A symphony, then, mediates between these two aspects of Nature. It arises out of the materials of experience and must develop in concordance with Nature’s forms. The music also must lead the listener into the realm of the infinite and the eternal.

This notion unmistakably reflects the influence of Hoffmann and a traditional Romantic aesthetic. As Lippman explains, early Romantic writers held that “the musical experience is that of an individual who is alone or withdrawn, related only to music and to the world it reveals, which is typically one of vast spaces, the cosmos, or infinity and often inhabited by supernatural beings”; furthermore, “[t]he religious and metaphysical experiences are often literally combined, but a symphony in itself represents a kind of religious experience; art becomes religion.”⁷⁵

Combine these views with Mahler’s taste for Romantic writers of the early nineteenth century (Hoffmann, Schiller, Hölderlin, Goethe), one arrives at the conclusion that Mahler, for all his

⁷³ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 96.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁷⁵ Lippman, *A History of Western Musical Aesthetics*, 207.

departures from tradition, possessed a relatively conservative aesthetic sensibility. In fact, one could argue that this aspect of his value system grew more conservative over time. Whereas he previously entertained providing programmatic explanations for his work, the Mahler of the middle-period symphonies completely rejected their usefulness. Therefore, Mahler's approach to composition does, in fact, correspond with his worldview on several levels of analysis. An investigation of the Seventh Symphony's compositional development will supplement this finding while exploring other facets of Mahler's aesthetic.

THE SEVENTH SYMPHONY AND RECOMPOSITION

Compositional History

Very few sketch materials survive for any of Mahler's works, particularly those related to his earliest musical ideas. Fortunately, two of Mahler's sketchbooks survive, and one of these primarily contains material related to the Seventh along with additional material from the Sixth, the Ninth, and a fair amount of unused material. Two studies of this sketchbook—the first conducted by Hefling (1997) and the second by Anna Stoll Knecht (2016)—pursue a detailed investigation of the sketches in order to obtain new insights on development of the Seventh. I will summarize their findings, offer a proposed timeline for the symphony's composition, and draw conclusions about the significance of this information based upon the established understanding of Mahler's compositional process and its significance for his worldview.

Hefling's examination constitutes the first study of this document. The sketchbook consists of thirty leaves (including six musical staves for every folio) with a black imitation-

leather binding and “Skizzen” embossed on one side.⁷⁶ In this sketchbook as well as the other extant notebook, Mahler wrote down ideas in both the front and back. Hefling explains:

Mahler wrote from both ends of the notebook, turning it ‘upside-down’ when working on the opposite side, such that the binding was always on the left and the leaves could be turned normally, recto to verso. (The only feature distinguishing obverse of the black binding from reverse is the imprint ‘Skizzen’ on the front.) Twenty-eight pages in the middle portion of the book are blank; effectively, it is as though Mahler had two shorter sketchbooks, which probably made it easier for him to find a given item when needed.⁷⁷

Because of this practice, determining which side represents earlier work is impossible from a purely visual standpoint. The numbering of each page, from an unknown hand and added at a later date (probably by the *Österreichische Nationalbibliothek* where it resides), begins at the “back” of the sketchbook, so that the “front” begins with folio 30v.⁷⁸ Therefore, the sketchbook’s contents consist of: (1) a “front” section, folios 30v-27v, containing sketches exclusively related to the Seventh Symphony (particularly the first movement with the exception of a single sketch related to the Rondo-Finale on folio 29r) along with some missing leaves ripped out from between 29r and 28v; (2) a “back” section, folios 1r-13r, containing miscellaneous unused sketches (1r-2v, 3v-7r, and 9r), sketches related to the Finale of the Sixth (3r), sketches related to the Finale of the Ninth (7v-8v), extensive sketch-work on an unused A-minor Scherzo and/or *Ländler* (8v-9v, 12v-13r), extensive sketching of what became the climax of the Seventh’s first movement (10v-11v), and a brief sketch of the primary theme in its initial expository appearance (12r); and (3) and blank middle section, folios 13v-27r, separating the front and back.⁷⁹

Hefling postulates that Mahler first sketched the “front” side of the sketchbook, and argues, “the contents of this sketchbook strongly suggest that Mahler was searching for just the

⁷⁶ Hefling, “*Ihm in die Lieder zu blicken*,” 170.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 173, 200.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 174-80. Hefling’s table contains enormously helpful details of the contents of each folio, the meter(s) of the sketches, the tonality, and the existence or non-existence of continuity between individual folios.

sort of material he would have needed to round out the Seventh Symphony in the summer of 1905.”⁸⁰ This date stems from two pieces of evidence. The first comes from a letter Mahler wrote to Alma on 8 June 1910 in which he reminisces about the summers of 1905 and 1906 when he found himself suddenly moved to compose the Eighth and finish composing the Seventh, respectively. After describing the summer of 1906 and the Eighth’s inspiration, Mahler relates:

The previous summer [1905] I’d been intending to complete the 7th (of which the two Andantes [the second and fourth movements, both titled *Nachtmusik*] were already finished). For two weeks I plagued myself to desperation, as you surely recall—and finally I made off for the Dolomites. But there it was the same story. Finally I gave up and drove home, convinced that the summer had been wasted. You weren’t waiting for me at Krumpendorf because I hadn’t announced my arrival. I got into the boat to be ferried across. At the sound of oars plying through water I was suddenly inspired to the theme (or rather the rhythm and atmosphere) of the introduction to the first movement—and within four weeks the first, third, and fifth movements were completely finished.⁸¹

The second piece of evidence comes from the sketchbook itself. On the first folio of the front side (30v), one finds a sketch directly related to the Seventh’s B-minor Introduction, which Hefling believes “may well be the sketch Mahler made on the boat (or shortly after stepping off).”⁸² The following folios on this side of the sketchbook demonstrate Mahler working out various components of what would become the first movement: folio 30r contains a sketch of the secondary theme in F major (Mahler altered this to C major in the final version), folio 29v continues the sketch of the secondary theme with the annotation “Es-dur probieren” (“try E-flat”), folio 29r includes the sketch related to the Finale, folio 28v sketches the transition theme as it appears in the recapitulation and exposition, folio 28r includes the parenthetical statement of the primary theme that occurs mid-exposition, and folio 27v returns to the Introduction with a fully realized version of the opening tenor-horn solo.⁸³ One can clearly see Mahler gathering the

⁸⁰ Hefling, “*Ihm in die Lieder zu blicken*,” 190.

⁸¹ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 357.

⁸² Hefling, “*Ihm in die Lieder zu blicken*,” 187.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 179-80.

necessary materials for a large sonata-allegro movement, confirming his testimony concerning how the incident in the boat set off his creativity.

Despite this strong piece of evidence, the assertion that the entire sketchbook pertains to the early weeks of summer 1905 depends upon an assumption about the back part of the sketchbook. The material in the back section directly related to the Seventh comes in the form of an extensive sketch of the first movement's climax. Hefling notes, "the nature of the handwriting suggests that it was composed 'of a piece' in one short session."⁸⁴ Because of this, he argues:

While we cannot be altogether certain about the chronology of ideas, this sketch provides a strong hint that it was composed after the first jotting for the movement's introduction: the jagged arpeggiating accompaniment outlined here, although subsequently to be modified, clearly imitates the contours and dotted rhythms of the initial idea found on folios 30v and 27v (cf. FV, bars 2 ff., tenor horn).⁸⁵

This assertion, while logical, ignores an important aspect of Mahler's compositional practice. As he told Bauer-Lechner in response to her asking "how music is composed": "[i]t happens in a hundred different ways . . . I often begin in the middle, often at the beginning, sometimes even at the end, and the rest of it gradually falls into place until it develops into a complete whole."⁸⁶ Zychowicz frequently points out that Mahler's sketches contain varied levels of detail. Some sketches contain extensively worked-out ideas alongside others in their most primitive form. Therefore, one cannot assume that the folios of the back part necessarily came later because of its level of detail. In fact, more recent findings by Anna Stoll Knecht point to the opposite conclusion.

This second study takes up a part of sketchbook that Hefling does not discuss in detail: the "unused" or "unknown" folios containing ideas not readily identified with a completed work.

⁸⁴ Hefling, "Ihm in die Lieder zu blicken," 201.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 205.

⁸⁶ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 33.

Stoll Knecht argues that the presence of unused materials “encourages us to consider the work not as the inevitable outcome of a teleological process, but as the path that Mahler eventually chose to take among others that he seriously contemplated.”⁸⁷ By focusing on these folios of the sketchbook’s back section, Stoll Knecht maintains, “[a]fter close examination, the material previously labelled as ‘unknown’ in the sketches for the Seventh began to reveal some fragile connections to it.”⁸⁸ Although one cannot link these folios to specific measures in the completed work, Stoll Knecht identifies early versions of motives related to all movements of the Seventh (although links to the Scherzo appear more tenuous) as well as to the outer movements of the Sixth. This complicates the compositional history of the Seventh. Generally, the sketches of the back section contain less developed ideas than those of the front, and the fact that all of the front sketches find their way into the completed work implies that the sketches of the back section precede those of the front:

Aside from four pages used in the first movement of the Seventh (fols. 10v-12r), and two that figure in the Finale of the Ninth (fols. 7v and 8r), the back section mostly contains material that was previously labelled as “unknown” (nineteen of twenty-five pages). Some of these sketches may be related to the Sixth Symphony (I and IV) and others to the Seventh (I, II, possibly III, IV and V). This suggests that Mahler started using the back section first, and then the front, although we must allow for the possibility that he went back and forth between both sides.⁸⁹

If Hefling’s theory that the front section constitutes work after Mahler’s flash of inspiration on the boat holds true, this leads to the conclusion that the sketchbook contains work from (at least) two summers. Whereas the front section comes from the early part of the summer of 1905, the content of the back section must originate from the prior summer of 1904 or, perhaps, even earlier.

⁸⁷ Anna Stoll Knecht, “Preliminary Sketches for Mahler’s Seventh Symphony,” in *Naturalauf: Scholarly Journeys Toward Gustav Mahler*, ed. Paul-André Bempéchat, 297-343 (New York: Peter Lang, 2016), 309.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 310.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 312-13.

Stoll Knecht provides additional evidence for this timeline by consulting the surviving evidence for the second phase of the Seventh's composition, known as the "Moldenhauer Sketches" due to their belonging to the Hans Moldenhauer archive of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. Stoll Knecht describes them, stating:

The Moldenhauer sketches show a more advanced stage in the compositional process than the sketchbook. The first three leaves of the group contain sketches that ended up in the Finale of the Seventh (fols. 1v, 2v, 3r, 3v) along with unknown music. The recto of the first leaf bears sketches for the first movement of the Sixth Symphony in ink, while the verso has sketches for the Finale of the Seventh in pencil. The music on the fourth leaf of the Moldenhauer sketches is unknown; and the fifth contains material related to both *Nachtmusiken*.⁹⁰

The existence of sketches related to movements completed in 1904 (the first movement of the Sixth, the second and fourth movements of the Seventh) existing alongside several folios related to the Seventh's Finale suggests that the last movement originated earlier than previously supposed. Stoll Knecht also convincingly demonstrates how particular folios of the Moldenhauer sketches develop motivic ideas that come directly from "unknown" pages of the sketchbook, reinforcing the argument for an earlier date for the back portion:

The strong connections between the sketchbook and the Moldenhauer sketches suggest that Mahler drew the more extended sketches on the Moldenhauer oblong leaves on the basis of preliminary sketches included in the sketchbook. To summarize, some of the motivic material in this section of the sketchbook points toward the first *Nachtmusik* of the Seventh (fols. 2v, 3r), to the second *Nachtmusik* (fol. 7r), to the first movement (fols. 3r, 7r), and some of it to the first and last movements of the Sixth Symphony (fols. 3r and 7r to the Finale; fols. 4v, 5r and 5v to the first movement). In addition, I have demonstrated how the material on fols. 3r, 3v and 7r is closely related to the Moldenhauer fols. 1r, 1v and 2r, which are themselves connected to the Finale of the Seventh.⁹¹

Thus, the insights of her investigation will allow for an attempted reconstruction of the Seventh's development.

⁹⁰ Stoll Knecht, "Preliminary Sketches for Mahler's Seventh Symphony," 313.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 331.

Putting together the evidence from various sources—the sketchbook, the Moldenhauer sketches, Mahler’s letters, and other biographical accounts—and filling in certain gaps with reasonable speculations, the following presents a timeline for the Seventh’s composition:

- **Summer 1903:** Mahler begins work on the Sixth Symphony, composing the second and third movements in their entirety. La Grange argues that sketches for the outer movements date from this summer as well, but Mahler did not complete them until the following year.⁹² Because of this, I believe most (if not all) of the sketchbook’s back section originated from this summer, which includes sketches overtly related to the Sixth’s Finale, “unknown” sketches that Stoll Knecht links motivically to both the Sixth and Seventh, and possibly the extensive sketch of the Seventh’s climax.⁹³
- **21 June 1904:** Shortly after the birth of his daughter Anna (on 15 June), Mahler travels alone to his summer home in Maiernigg.⁹⁴
- **24 June 1904:** Mahler writes to Alma: “I struggled vainly to assemble the fragments of my inner self (how long will it take to pull myself together?).”⁹⁵ This implies that Mahler, as usual, struggled to begin composing.
- **29 June 1904:** Mahler begins work on the second and fifth songs of his *Kindertotenlieder*, a work he originally started in 1901.⁹⁶
- **6 July 1904:** Mahler writes to Friedrich Löhr: “I find it difficult to write, having for so long written nothing but music. Again I have some things to be brought forth into the light of day.”⁹⁷
- **9 July 1904:** Mahler informs Alma that he will take a trip to the Dolomites, and as La Grange and Weiss observe, “[w]henver he came to the end of a period of intensive activity, Mahler liked to spend a few days in the Dolomites. The fact that he did so at this juncture implies that he had just completed the second and fifth of his *Kindertotenlieder*.”⁹⁸
- **11 July 1904:** Mahler writes to Alma: “[o]ne thing, above all: in the middle drawer of my desk (you have the key) are some manuscripts which you should bring with you. I most urgently need the second and third movements of the Sixth Symphony, which I forgot to bring with me.”⁹⁹ Thus, Mahler begins work on the outer movements of the Sixth around this date. If the back section of the sketchbook did not originate from 1903, it surely came into being at this point. Likely, Mahler created the Moldenhauer sketches at this juncture as well.

⁹² La Grange, *Vienna: The years of Challenge (1897-1904)*, 711.

⁹³ I tentatively submit this early date due to the relatively unfocused nature of the sketches in the back section, excepting the folios related to the first movement climax of the Seventh. It appears that Mahler, beginning fresh work toward a new composition, is meandering in a number of directions, creating the kind of “primeval soup” (Fischer’s term) previously discussed. This would explain how several of these folios could contain motives related to both the Sixth and Seventh, since neither work had acquired definite shape. As to the climactic episode, this could represent later work from 1904 when Mahler’s conception of the Sixth was fully in view. Of course, this remains speculative, but in any case, the simultaneous emergence of sketches for both symphonies strengthens the conceptual link between them.

⁹⁴ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 2, 707.

⁹⁵ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 161.

⁹⁶ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol.2, 710.

⁹⁷ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 279.

⁹⁸ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 173-74.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 174.

- **[Early to Mid-August?] 1904:** Mahler writes an undated letter to Bruno Walter: “My Sixth is finished.”¹⁰⁰
- **18 August 1904:** Mahler sends a postcard to Alma informing her that he arrived in the Dolomites, indicating, as La Grange and Weiss surmise, “he had brought a further phase of creative activity to a successful conclusion.”¹⁰¹ This likely refers to the completion of the Sixth Symphony. It is impossible to know how much work Mahler already accomplished on the Seventh by this point, but given the intertwined nature of the Sixth and Seventh in the sketchbook and preliminary sketches, it seems likely that he already possessed clear ideas about the work in progress.
- **Between 18 and 31 August 1904:** Mahler likely finishes work (stage 4) on the two *Nachtmusiken* of the Seventh (movements II and IV). Alma also reports that Mahler, at some point before the end of this summer, created “architect’s drawings” [*Bauskizzen*] for the Seventh.¹⁰² Concerning this term, Hefling believes, “these very likely included one or more lists of movements such as those that survive for the Third, Fourth, and Eighth Symphonies.”¹⁰³
- **31 August 1904:** Mahler leaves for the Vienna to begin another conducting season at the *Hofoper*.¹⁰⁴ In total, Mahler’s work on the Seventh from 1904 amounts to: (1) two completed movements (*Nachtmusiken*); (2) several preliminary sketches related to the Finale; (3) sketchbook ideas for the climax of the first movement and its primary theme; and (4) “architect’s drawings” indicating the number of movements, their order, and other potential details concerning the large-scale construction of the work.
- **June 1905:** Mahler arrives in Maiernigg, but as La Grange reports, “that summer, Mahler could not devote himself entirely to his creative work, for he had to plan the coming season and the cycle of performances in celebration of Mozart’s 150th birthday.”¹⁰⁵
- **23 June 1905:** Fearing a loss of creative inspiration, Mahler wrote to Alma to inform her of a spontaneous trip to the Dolomites.¹⁰⁶ As Mahler’s 1910 letter to her (already quoted above) testifies, Mahler left this trip fearing the summer amounted to a total creative loss. The flash of inspiration from the striking of the boat oar occurred on the return journey in which “the theme (or rather the rhythm and atmosphere) of the introduction to the first movement” suddenly came to him. Therefore, a few days after the 23 June letter, Mahler worked on the front section of the sketchbook, containing the sketch of the introduction and most of the other themes of the first movement.
- **[Late June to Late July 1905]:** Given Mahler’s account that, after the inspiration from the boat trip, “within four weeks the first, third, and fifth movements were ready,” one can assume that Mahler completed the significant work already begun on the Finale, quickly fleshed out his initial ideas for the first movement toward their completion, and possibly composed all of the Scherzo from initial sketch to draft score within this time-frame.
- **15 August 1905:** Mahler finishes (stage 4) the Seventh Symphony by marking the last page of the draft score of the first movement with the inscription: “15. August 1905 / *Septima finita*.”¹⁰⁷ It appears, then, that while 1905’s work on the Seventh began with the first movement, Mahler orchestrated it last.

¹⁰⁰ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 280.

¹⁰¹ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 176.

¹⁰² Mahler-Werfel, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*, 89.

¹⁰³ Hefling, “*Ihm in die Lieder zu blicken*,” 185.

¹⁰⁴ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 2, 714.

¹⁰⁵ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 3, 238.

¹⁰⁶ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 211.

¹⁰⁷ Stoll Knecht, “Preliminary Sketches for Mahler’s Seventh Symphony,” 305.

Given this timeline, I will draw three conclusions.

First, the date of the sketchbook's back section and its correspondence to the Moldenhauer sketches reveals the extraordinary degree with which Mahler's ideas for the Sixth and Seventh were intertwined. Of course, scholars frequently point out examples of musical ideas in the Seventh that reference or directly quote parts of the Sixth, but Stoll Knecht's investigation reveal the surprising degree to which both works emerged simultaneously. As part of her investigation, she argues that a significant aspect of the Seventh's negative reception relates to its close relationship to the Sixth: "[i]t seems that the Seventh cannot be understood in its own terms, but only in relationship with its predecessor."¹⁰⁸ This leads her to a strange conclusion:

The idea that, in 1904, Mahler was at work on both the outer movements of the Sixth and the finale of the Seventh has potential implications for the reception of the Seventh. As we have seen, the latter suffered from the comparison with its predecessor, and has been perceived as a mere consequence of the Sixth—'music after the catastrophe.' But if the composition of the Sixth and Seventh was more entangled than previously thought, and if they were partly composed out of the same reservoir, in the same matrix (like twins, to use a biological metaphor), it becomes more problematic to refer to the Seventh as the sequel of the Sixth. Their intertwined genesis rather suggests that these two works are, on some level, contemporary with each other. Moreover, the node of opposition between these works—their Finales—would have been conceived more or less at the same time, which places this opposition in a new light.¹⁰⁹

If anything, this evidence appears to confirm the notion that the Seventh directly responds to the Sixth. Of course, Stoll Knecht is motivated to distance the Seventh from the Sixth due to negative criticism, but I argue, in fact, that this simultaneous conception corroborates one of the foundational assertions of this project: Mahler came to consider (though he did not necessarily plan from the outset) the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh as an interrelated trilogy.

¹⁰⁸ Stoll Knecht, "Preliminary Sketches for Mahler's Seventh Symphony," 301.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 332.

One finds historical precedent in Mahler's approach to his first four symphonies. In a letter from May 1896, Mahler wrote, "I'm now in the middle of my 3rd. It's my best and most mature! With it I conclude my 'Trilogie der Leidenschaft'! God, what regions have I entered there!"¹¹⁰ This title obviously references Goethe's poems of the same name—*Trilogy of Passion* (1823-24): I. "To Werther," II. "Elegy," III. "Reconciliation"—and its use to describe these symphonies demonstrates that Mahler considered the three symphonies to be thematically and expressively linked. At this point, he still planned to end the Third Symphony with the *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* song "Das himmlische Leben," which eventually became the Finale of the Fourth Symphony. During the same summer that Mahler finished composition of the Third, Zychowicz notes that Mahler began to draft the early plans (*Bauskizzen*) of what became the Fourth Symphony.¹¹¹ When it became apparent that the Third would conclude without "Das himmlische Leben," Mahler immediately began to plan another symphonic work that would include it. By the time he discussed the work with Bauer-Lechner in the summer of 1900, she relates that "Mahler emphasized the close connection of the Fourth with these [earlier symphonies], to which it forms a conclusion. In their content and structure, the four of them form a perfectly self-contained tetralogy."¹¹² Therefore, the degree of coincidence of the Sixth and Seventh's composition would hardly suggest their independence. Rather, it demonstrates that the Seventh directly responds to the Sixth Symphony.

Second, in light of Mahler's beliefs about inspiration and the seed-to-tree development of his works, the back section of the sketchbook appears to corroborate this notion with tangible evidence. While Stoll Knecht correctly points out that, frequently, Mahler's first ideas ultimately

¹¹⁰ Blaukopf, ed., *Mahler's Unknown Letters*, 122.

¹¹¹ Zychowicz, *Mahler's Fourth Symphony*, 48.

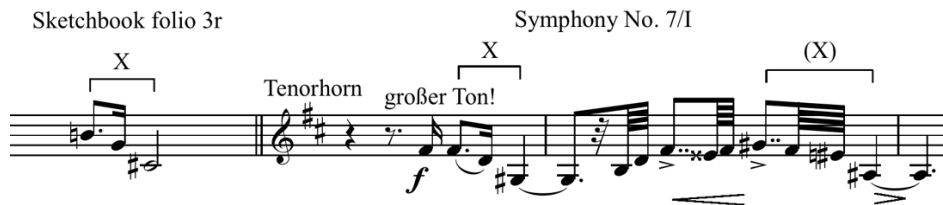
¹¹² Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 154.

led nowhere, this does not necessarily negate the fact that an entire work might emerge from the simplest musical motive. Her examination of one of the “unknown” folios (3r) reveals what may be the inception-point of the Seventh:

There is one element worth emphasizing, however: the presence of the cell opening the Seventh (X) in the sketchbook on fol. 3r, which probably precedes the ‘boat sketch’ found at the beginning of the front side (fol. 30v). Therefore, even if Mahler had a revelation moment on the boat, which allowed him to carry the work from beginning to end, the melodic-rhythmic idea on which this introduction is grounded (X) could have been sketched there at an earlier time, waiting to be discovered later.¹¹³

Example 4.1 compares this initial appearance of the motive Stoll Knecht labels as “X” and the opening theme of the first movement’s Introduction.

Example 4.1: Sketchbook folio 3r, third system, m. 4 / Symphony No. 7/I, mm. 2-3¹¹⁴



While these three notes may not signify the kind of heaven-sent inspiration Mahler often described, it perhaps serves as a precursor to just such a moment. Whatever date Mahler composed folios 10v-12v (either in 1903 or 1904), these pages offer a surprisingly detailed version of what became measures 495-500 and 502-4 (10v), 505-11 (11r), and 512-22 (11v) of the first movement. One can easily see (from Hefling’s facsimiles and transcriptions of these folios) how Mahler uses “X” throughout as a unifying motivic idea.¹¹⁵ If this passage does

¹¹³ Stoll Knecht, “Preliminary Sketches for the Seventh Symphony,” 331-32.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 335; my sketchbook example is based on the facsimile and transcription of this folio by Stoll Knecht.

¹¹⁵ Hefling, “Ihm in die Lieder zu blicken,” 177-78; the relevant facsimiles and transcriptions appear on pp. 206-8.

indeed constitute a flash of inspiration, it may represent the moment, in Mahler's mind, that the Seventh Symphony began. After writing this passage (perhaps in 1904), Mahler went back to the earlier folios to gather the material that Stoll Knecht relates to the other movements of the Seventh. Why Mahler halted work on the first movement to focus on the second, fourth, and fifth movements remain unknown.¹¹⁶ Regardless, the documentary evidence coheres with Mahler's descriptions of his compositional process.

The third conclusion follows naturally out of the previous two and leads into the analysis of the Seventh. From the Seventh Symphony's concurrent development with the Sixth to the potentialities latent in its earliest sketches, the evidence demonstrates that Mahler's compositional theory and practice conformed with his views on the part and the whole. From the outset, Mahler contemplated this work's relationship, as part, to the larger whole of the middle-period symphonies. Likewise, the most seemingly insignificant motives in the sketchbook contained the necessary means for realizing the totality of the symphony. This reveals Mahler's thinking about the part-whole relationship on several levels: (1) the motivic seed that grows into a fully-fledged work; (2) the work that functions as a part within a larger expressive whole, spanning multiple works; and (3) and the work's synecdochal function as a stand-in for Nature, both as a material and a transcendent reality.

With this in mind, the investigation of the Seventh will continue along other lines to determine how the work manifests Mahler's aesthetic imperative of the world-embracing symphony. Stoll Knecht, as mentioned, observes how the Seventh's negative reception stems from the fact that it follows the Sixth, a work extensively analyzed and held in high esteem by scholars for its (relative) formal and narrative clarity. The Seventh, as a sprawling and

¹¹⁶ Mahler apparently did this for this Third Symphony as well, composing the five movements of Part II in 1895 and returning to complete Part I (the first movement) in 1896; Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 53.

ambiguous counterpart, lacks this degree of clarity, and in the estimations of many critics, fails as a convincing response to the tragic implications of the Sixth. What some of these commentators ignore, however, is that the Seventh Symphony equally responds to the Fifth Symphony. While hardly a new argument in Mahler scholarship (Zychowicz notes that it was first put forward by Paul Bekker), the recent academic focus on the Sixth obscures this important feature of the Seventh, which completes the narrative of the middle-period works by revisiting, reworking, and addressing numerous musical, narrative, and worldview-related aspects of *both* prior works.¹¹⁷ The analysis that follows specifically focuses on the ways in which the Seventh engages in recomposition of the Fifth and Sixth. In keeping with the preceding discussion, I will begin by examining the two movements that Mahler completed first—the *Nachtmusiken*—to demonstrate that, within these two movements, one finds a complete narrative concept that characterizes the entire Seventh. This supports the assertion that Mahler considered the Seventh the narrative conclusion of the middle-period symphonies as early as 1904. Then, I will briefly discuss the ways in which the movements written in 1905—the first, third, and fifth movements—continue the process of recomposition.

The *Nachtmusiken* of 1904: A Narrative Analysis

II. Nachtmusik. Allegro moderato

If one needed to submit a single movement as evidence that Mahler believed the symphony must “embrace everything,” the first *Nachtmusik* of the Seventh would make an

¹¹⁷ Zychowicz, “Ein schlechter Jasager: Considerations on the Finale to Mahler’s Seventh Symphony,” in *The Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler: A Symposium*, ed. James L. Zychowicz, 98-106 (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, 1990), 102.

excellent candidate. This relatively brief movement contains multitudes of sounds, colors, and topics, but Mahler manages to maintain a unified mode of expression throughout. The critical reception of this movement tends to focus on these disparate features. As La Grange observed, “the abundance of symbolic elements—march rhythm, military fanfares, echoing horns, wind-band music, birdsong, cowbells—is bewildering.”¹¹⁸ Focusing on the narrative, however, brings the movement into sharper focus. At first glance, the archetypal categories outlined by Almén and Frye do not easily fit. The *march* that forms the core of the movement presents a tonal ambiguity, constantly shifting between C major and minor, which complicates the task of discerning the transvaluation. While Fischer believes that “[t]he first ‘Nachtmusik’ has something of a funeral march about it,” Thomas Peattie views the movement primarily as an idyll, although one that “appears to be in constant jeopardy.”¹¹⁹ The movement does ultimately end in C minor, but Mahler also includes a last-second ambiguity in the form of a final, isolated G in the harp and cellos (played as a harmonic), hanging like an implied half-cadence. Ultimately, one can characterize this movement as tragic, but it seems that the ambiguity—its in-between-ness, so to speak—forms part of its expressive purpose.

The form presents another ambiguity. It fulfills neither the role of slow movement or dance movement. Contra Fischer, one cannot easily characterize it as a funeral march given its brisk tempo of *Allegro moderato* and frequently cheerful atmosphere. *Nachtmusik I* most readily falls into the category of a March with two Trios, but it also possesses a rondo-like character. Floros describes the movement as an “arch form” with a “mirror structure,” and La Grange diagrams it as “ABA.C.ABA (with Introduction and Coda), in other words a symmetrical

¹¹⁸ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 3, 861.

¹¹⁹ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 459; Thomas Peattie, *Gustav Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 146.

form.”¹²⁰ Reinhold Kubik, on the other hand, discerns the outlines of sonata form within its rondo structure: Introduction (mm. 1-29), Exposition (mm. 30-178), Development (mm. 179-222), Recapitulation (mm. 223-317), and Coda (mm. 318-343).¹²¹ This remains unconvincing, however, due to absence of strong thematic or tonal development, which Kubik himself acknowledges. Likewise, the movement hardly reflects the degree of symmetry put forward in the analyses of Floros and La Grange. Instead, it begins with a basic rotation—Introduction, March, Trio—that Mahler reworks in two subsequent iterations. In these terms (Figure 4.1), one can easily see how Mahler truncates, expands, breaks up, and reorders this series as a part of a broader trajectory in which an attempted move from darkness to light (R1) becomes distorted (in R2 and R3) and eventually fails.

Scholars generally acknowledge the Romantic spirit of this music, reinforced by the testimony of Alma that Mahler “was beset by Eichendorff-ish visions—murmuring springs and German romanticism.”¹²² Fischer insightfully points out that “[i]n using the term [*Nachtmusik*], Mahler will have thought of Mozart’s *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* but also of Robert Schumann’s four *Nachtstücke* op. 23. In turn, the expression will have been associated in the minds of both Schumann and Mahler with the *Nachtstücke* of E. T. A. Hoffmann.”¹²³ While a number of analysts, particularly Peter Davison, explore ways in which this movement might relate to these sources of Romantic literature, my analysis will attend to the often-neglected narrative of the movement and a few of its potent musical symbols.

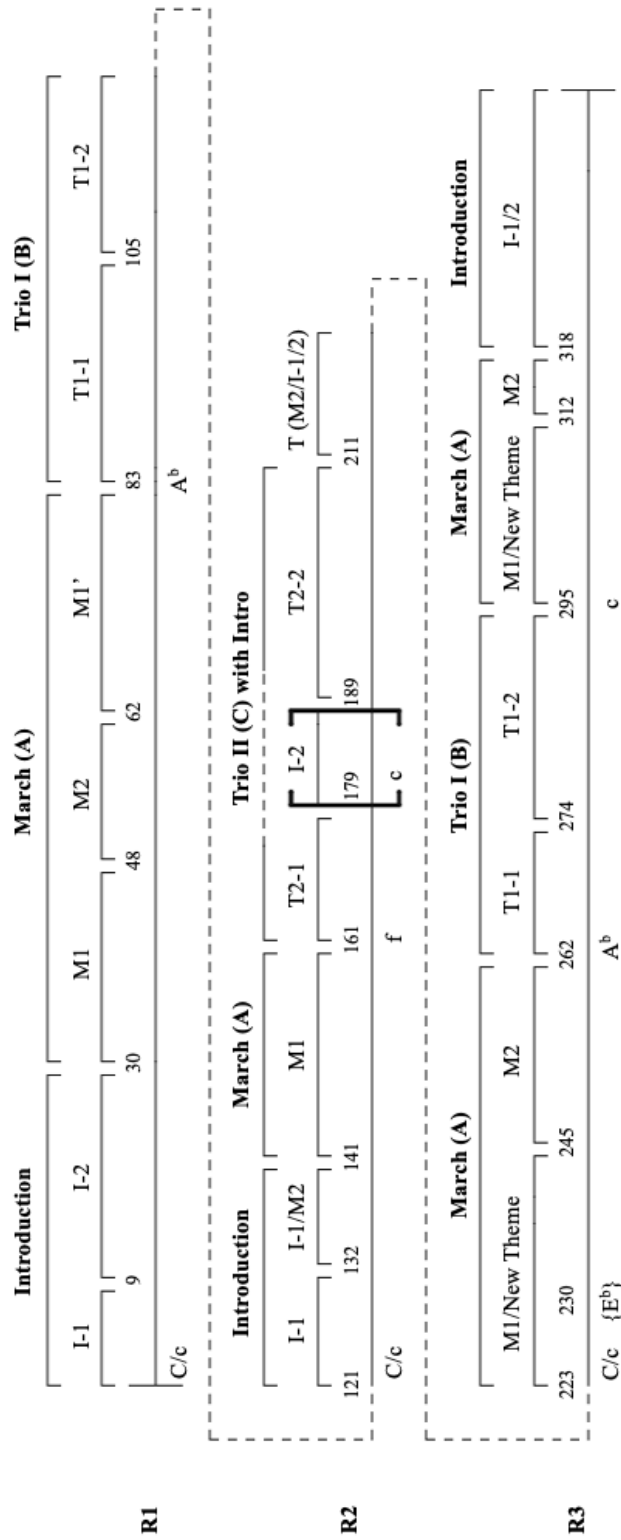
¹²⁰ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 198; La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 3, 860.

¹²¹ Reinhold Kubik, “Siebente Symphonie,” in *Gustav Mahler: Interpretationen seiner Werke*, vol. 2, ed. Peter Revers and Oliver Korte (Laaber, German: Laaber-Verlag, 2011), 104-5.

¹²² Mahler-Werfel, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*, 92.

¹²³ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 458-59.

Figure 4.1: Symphony No. 7/II, Formal Diagram



The first rotation, considered as a single incident, sets out a miniature narrative arc that subsequent rotations will subvert. The introduction contains two distinct subsections that accomplish separate tasks. The first of these, I-1 (mm. 1-9), begins with a call-and-response between two solo horns. Mahler notates the first horn part with the direction “*rufend*” (“call,” marked *fortissimo*) and the other with “*antwortend*” (“answer,” marked *piano* and instructed to play muted). Brown points out that this intertextually references Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*, specifically the third movement, which itself contains call-and-response passages within the context of a pastoral setting.¹²⁴ This effect creates a feeling of isolation and spatial distance, a feature that Peattie investigates throughout Mahler’s *oeuvre*. He argues that Mahler adapted the use of distant sound from the opera stage, which sometimes utilizes off-stage instruments to create this effect. Peattie recognizes, however, that Mahler began to develop more subtle ways of communicating this idea:

For as a careful study of the scores and sketches reveals, the composer’s earliest works already invite the listener to embrace the possibility that distant music might originate from the stage itself. Whereas the presence of such moments is often apparent to the attentive listener, of greater interest in the present context are those passages in which the illusion of distant sound is supplemented by a prominent and seldom discussed layer of annotations that occupy the border between performance directions and extra-musical reference.¹²⁵

The annotations of “call” and “answer” certainly apply in this case. Peattie connects this aesthetic to the “trope of Romantic distance,” referring to the type of solitary heroic figure found in the writings of Jean Paul and Hoffmann.¹²⁶ One can infer that the feeling created by the opening of this movement forms an extension of these ideas and references.

¹²⁴ Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire*, vol. 4, 690.

¹²⁵ Peattie, *Gustav Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes*, 47-48.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 57, 63.

If the first subsection of the introduction establishes the isolated Romantic hero, then the second subsection (I-2, mm. 9-29) situates him within a strange (and tragic) nocturnal realm. Beginning with clarinet and oboe, Mahler begins to unfold a dense orchestral texture of *Naturlaut*—a sound of Nature—replicating the calls of birds and other noises of the night. Kubik describes this music as Impressionistic, while noting that “it differs in that the mood is not an end unto itself.”¹²⁷ This continues to build until a breaking point where Mahler re-introduces two potent musical symbols of the Sixth: a major-minor seal and collapse (mm. 27-29). Thus, the introduction directly links this movement with the previous symphony, utilizing the same dark symbol of fate within the context of the C-major/-minor Introduction. Far from merely establishing a mood, however, the first twenty-nine measures return at various points throughout the movement and play a significant role in its unfolding narrative.

Following this collapse, a *march* emerges that contains not only the topical hallmarks of *march* but also some characteristics of *ombra* (*col legno* in the strings, woodwind trills, mode mixture). The troping of these topics creates a unique atmosphere. The *march* implies a procession—music that is *going somewhere*. Peattie discusses this feature in the context of the first movement of the Third, stating:

Mahler introduces the idea of imagined distance into a sprawling musical structure whose defining characteristic is its prominent processional topic. Indeed, the movement as a whole demonstrates the potential of a static orchestral apparatus to produce the effect of a mobile sound source. Since these “stationary” processions emphasize the gradual intensification of sound rather than the more characteristically Romantic preoccupation with its decay, this movement also presents the march not as a past event heard through the filter of memory but rather as an active site of becoming.¹²⁸

Examining all the reappearances of the *march* in this movement, one can observe a general trend of intensification, though not as distinctly linear or continuous as the example from the Third.

¹²⁷ Kubik, “*Siebente Symphonie*,” 104.

¹²⁸ Peattie, *Gustav Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes*, 66.

Nevertheless—given the Third’s one-time first-movement title of “Summer Marches In”—the character of this movement might invite the programmatic title “Night Marches In.” The *ombra* elements, particularly the modal mixture of C major and minor, confuse whether or not this represents a primarily positive or negative outcome. Thus, the *march* itself exists in limbo, in a world of in-between.

The March contains three sub-sections: M1 (mm. 30-47), M2 (mm. 48-61), and M1’ (mm. 61-82). The theme of M1 expounds on the idea presented at the outset, and it also contains subtle references (in rhythm and gestural shape, not necessary pitch) to what Stoll Knecht called motive “X.”

Example 4.2: Symphony No. 7/II, mm. 29-33



According to the proposed timeline, Mahler initially conceived this motive independently in the sketches, worked it into his vision for the first-movement climax, and eventually decided to utilize it as a unifying idea throughout the work. One can only speculate as to whether or not Mahler already understood how it would function as part of the symphonic whole. Regardless, this initial A-section presents a clear progression of musical ideas: (1) M1 introduces the *march* as distant, moving back and forth between major and minor modes (although major, generally, predominates); (2) M2 offers a scaled-back and darker contrast in a more consistent C minor; and (3) M1’ repeats the opening section almost verbatim with an expanded orchestral texture that

includes the triplet figurations from I-2, again mostly in C major. This section, however, ends in C minor, closing out the March with three statements of “X.” Taken as a whole, this first iteration of the March will serve as a microcosm for the movement’s trajectory as a whole.

The first Trio follows with an abrupt move to A-flat major (a mediant relationship important to the work’s Finale), a quicker tempo, and a thematic idea, which La Grange characterizes as possessing a “deliberate ‘popular’ character.”¹²⁹ Topically, this “popular” theme suggests the *singing* style. In fact, one might characterize it as, quite literally, a *serenade*. For the time being, the *march* topic gives way to this more lyrical and romantic idea, which includes an appearance of an *Ewigkeit* motive variant, one that recalls the basic gestural shape while curtailing its upward reach for the transcendent.

Example 4.3: Symphony No. 7/II, mm. 86-89



As a *serenade*, this reference does not come as a surprise. Another point of interest comes from the way Mahler breaks the regularity of the phrase structure when this motive occurs. The March contained a series of very rigid thematic periods, and the beginning of Trio 1, given its simple and popular character, implies this will continue. After a four-bar antecedent phrase (mm. 83-86), the appearance of the *Ewigkeit* variant extends the consequent phrase further than expected, and closure does not occur until measure 95 (9 mm. total). The implication of the *Ewigkeit*

¹²⁹ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 3, 861.

variant (notably not a definitive version) combined with the irregular phrase structure suggests agency on the part of this theme: it attempts to break free from—transcend—the structural rigidity that characterizes the *march* topic. Davison argues as much when he states, “[s]hort-term aimlessness is checked by structural inevitabilities, because of the immanence of formal conventions, like a return, is a symbol of resignation to what must be.”¹³⁰ While Trio 1 carries on happily, it sinks back into the *march* topic and does not recover this effort, however tentative, to strive toward the transcendent.

The first Trio breaks down into two sub-sections. The first of these T1-1, contains the expanded period just described (mm. 83-95) and the other (mm. 96-105) returns to the *march* topic by completely subsuming the lyrical *serenade*. T1-2 begins with a four-measure, introductory *herald* for the flutes and oboes, accompanied by the horns. The thematic idea that follows opens up into a thick orchestral texture, simple tonic-and-dominant harmony. This happy vision quickly dissolves as the texture begins to thin, and Mahler ends the Trio in A-flat minor. Therefore, at the end of the first rotation, the progression from isolation and tragedy (introduction), to ambiguous music from afar coming closer (March), to romantic love-song and jovial march (Trio 1), demonstrates a clear sequence of ideas and emotions. While the reversion back to minor at the end of Trio 1 subverts the darkness-to-light narrative, the established pattern sets up expectations that the subsequent rotations will disrupt.

The second Trio provides the most obvious difference between the first and second rotation, but significantly, Mahler varies this rotation by reordering and transforming the established elements in interesting ways. While the second rotation begins similarly to the first with the return of the introduction, Mahler both adds and subtracts from it. He restages the call-

¹³⁰ Peter Davison, “Nachtmusik I: Sound and Symbol,” in *The Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler: A Symposium*, ed. James L. Zychowicz, 68-73 (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, 1990), 72.

and-response section of I-1 (mm. 121-30), but now he includes the accompaniment of cowbells, another feature that directly references the Sixth Symphony. Their first appearance in the Sixth occurs in the first movement's development section, in a passage that served as a retreat from the narrative conflict. Most scholars accept that their use in *Nachtmusik I* extends this notion of interiorization. As Davison suggests, “[f]or Mahler, the distant sound of cow bells induced passage into the world of the subconscious, where he transcended the limitations of everyday awareness.”¹³¹ Consequently, the horn duet ceases to articulate a spatial divide with both players responding to one another in equal volume (mm. 127-30), followed by a passage for a single horn continuing afterward (mm. 131-36). Section I-1 also integrates the most negative elements of the March in the form of M2, which begins to take on a transitional role. Notably, Mahler does not include I-2's dramatic build-up of sound and subsequent disintegration, preferring instead to lead straight into M1.

The March reappears in severely truncated form in this second rotation. Compared to the end of M1' in the first rotation, the *march* seems further away than before. It retains the incorporation of I-2 triplet figurations, and in most other respects, proceeds normally. Mahler does not include M2 or another varied statement of M1 as before. Instead, he moves directly toward the center of the movement, Trio 2. In several ways, the second Trio serves as a foil to the first. It begins in the relative minor key (F minor), and while it also presents a lyrical contrast to the March, it does so in the form of a *lament*, complete with numerous *sighing* gestures. Like the “popular” quality of Trio 1, this new thematic idea—an oboe duet, frequently moving in parallel thirds—evokes a simple, perhaps folk-like, style. Mahler also integrates other elements found elsewhere in the movement: *march* accompaniment figures (mm. 169, originally found in

¹³¹ Peter Davison, “*Nachtmusik I*: Sound and Symbol,” 70.

the *col legno* violins mm. 33) and the triplet figurations from I-2. Most significantly, a sudden move to C minor brings about the parenthetical insertion of the missing introduction section (I-2), complete with another major-minor seal. Trio 2 immediately picks up where it left off with another statement of its theme, this time remaining in C minor. The second rotation ends with a transitional passage that incorporates the M2 march, bird-call figurations for solo flute (from I-2), and *fanfare* gestures for trumpets and woodwinds (from I-1) that introduce the final rotation.

Now, Mahler substantially varies the formula, undermining the hopeful progression of musical events from the first rotation. He begins with the full arrival of the March (m. 223), and at this point, the topic of *learned style* (in a general sense) comes to the fore (though it was present throughout the March appearances) with staggered entrances between the upper and lower voices. This suggests the natural order—Chapin includes “nature” among the various associations of this topic—the manifold force of Nature moving in the same direction, if not completely in sync.¹³² As the high-point of *Nachtmusik I*, it communicates a feeling of optimism, and Mahler reinforces this with a new musical idea in E-flat major (mm. 231-38). For a while, the *march* progresses as expected, including the re-instantiation of M2 (beginning at m. 245). Instead of another varied statement of M1, however, R3 reprises Trio 1 (m. 262). The fuller orchestration constitutes the most obvious change to this second appearance of Trio 1. More subtly, Mahler blends the lyrical and martial qualities more cohesively from the outset, and this includes the accompaniment figures associated with the March and with Trio 2 (see the trumpets, mm. 262-5). As Trio 1 winds down, it appears that the A-flat major tonality will hold, but Mahler disrupts this positive outcome by returning to the March once more. In measure 295, the new material that first appeared in measures 231-38 returns now in A-flat major/minor (after a

¹³² Chapin, “Learned Style and Learned Styles,” 323.

brief C-minor opening). By way of F minor (briefly, mm. 305-8), he returns to C minor for another transitional passage of M2 (mm. 312-17). This begins the movement's Coda, which reworks I-2 with the horn solo of I-1 integrated into the texture. While not as monumental as the previous two instances, the movement ends with a decisive major-minor seal (mm. 337-9), putting an end to any ambiguity as to the tragic nature of the movement.

What does the narrative of *Nachtmusik I* signify? Essentially, it restages the tragedy of the Sixth Symphony in a new context. Despite its diversity of material, Davison argues that the movement retains its unity by filtering these elements through the singular consciousness of its narrator. He argues, “[t]he narrator himself, Mahler, could, after all, be telling a simple, albeit allegorical story in which the diverse elements represent settings, people, and events united by a single narrative thread.”¹³³ The presence of the cowbells, a direct reference to the contemplative sections of the Sixth (in movements 1 and 3), suggests that *Nachtmusik I* serves as an extension of these meditative moments. The solitary individual, contemplating the world, faces encroaching night both literally (the beauty and terror of the natural world) and metaphorically (as in a “dark night of the soul”). Trio 1 aspires toward higher and happier spheres that it does not quite reach, and Trio 2 expresses private grief, possibly in relationship to this failure to transcend the difficulties of life. Mahler cleverly shifts the major-minor seal in each rotation in order to highlight its significance. This symbol of tragic fate appears at the outset as a statement of fact, in the middle as unexpected and unhappy reminder, and at the end as an inevitability. When considering the fact that Mahler composed this movement the same summer that he wrote the Sixth's Finale, one could connect these three seals of fate to the three hammer-blows that

¹³³ Davison, “*Nachtmusik I*: Sound and Symbol,” 69.

came before it. Although Mahler later came to delete the third stroke of the hammer from the Sixth, it was still very much in place in the summer of 1904 when he conceived this movement.

IV. Nachtmusik. Andante amoroso

The second *Nachtmusik* reworks music from an earlier composition as well, but now, Mahler returns primarily to the Fifth Symphony. Specifically, he references the *Adagietto*, but the haunting implications of the Sixth lurk throughout the movement. Generally, *Nachtmusik II* presents fewer interpretive problems, but that does not diminish its strangeness. On the one hand, as Floros points out, “[t]he serenade character of the Seventh’s fourth movement is so strongly defined that there would be no doubt about it even without the headings *Nachtmusik* and *Andante amoroso*.”¹³⁴ On the other hand, Mahler disrupts this serenity at numerous points, even down to the phrase level. Like *Nachtmusik I*, the second *Nachtmusik* presents formal ambiguities. La Grange reproduces a formal outline of the movement form by Hans Swarowsky, noting such a scheme “cannot suggest any of the subtleties of the composition, nor any of its many formal ambiguities, complexities, asymmetries, disruptions, and the frequent unbalancing of the periodic structure thanks to elisions and overlaps.”¹³⁵ La Grange himself puts forward a simple diagram of the movement as “ABACA.DE.ABACA.”¹³⁶ Davison notes two ways of viewing the form: one may consider “bars 99-259 as a development section in a sonata form or else with bars 187-259 as a middle section in a ternary design.”¹³⁷ I take a middle road between these options. Overall, the movement suggests a Ternary form with the broad outlines of A-B-A.

¹³⁴ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 203.

¹³⁵ La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, vol. 3, 868.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Peter Davison, “*Nachtmusik II: ‘Nothing but Love, Love, Love?’*” in *The Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler: A Symposium*, ed. James L. Zychowicz, 89-97 (Cincinnati: The University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, 1990), 91.

Simultaneously the B-section functions as a development, which includes a significant interpolated section that links it to the recapitulation. Most importantly, *Nachtmusik II* presents a straightforward narrative that, through intertextual references, unlocks the meaning of the Seventh Symphony.

In terms of its narrative archetype, this movement represents a clear romance narrative in which a stable, major-key idea faces repeated threats of disruption, which it eventually overcomes. This reflects the narrative of the *Adagietto* as a single movement (it functioned together with the Fifth's Rondo-Finale as part of a comic narrative). Three other overt similarities solidify this connection: (1) it shares the tonal center of F major with the *Adagietto* (consequently with the Sixth's "Alma theme"); (2) it is a love song as referenced in the indication *Andante amoroso* (Floros also notes, "[l]ong stretches of the movement constitute a song without words"); and (3) it utilizes the *Ewigkeit* motive within a specifically romantic setting.¹³⁸ Other corroborating evidence will emerge as the analysis proceeds. The *Nachtmusik* opens with a kind of *cadential refrain* that punctuates the movement at various points.

¹³⁸ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 203.

Example 4.4: Symphony No. 7/IV, mm. 1-4

Andante amoroso
Solo
mit Aufschwung

(fate)
rit.

Violin I
f sf espr. *pp*

Violin II
f p dim. pp

Viola
f p dim. pp

Violoncello
f p dim. pp

Davison argues that this refrain bears a striking resemblance to the opening of *Tristan und Isolde*, given their upward-leaping gestures followed by chords of sharp dissonance and subsequent resolution.¹³⁹ This Wagnerian intertext may relate to fact that the *Adagietto* quotes or references the “Gaze motive,” as Floros first pointed out. I submit that this refrain also alludes to the Finale of the Fifth Symphony in two ways: (1) the upper melodic voice resembles the melody of the Refrain (see Example 2.19, specifically the transformed *fate* motive in the first two measures); and (2) this melody vaguely resembles (though rhythmically altered) *chorale(a)*, particularly in its apotheosis (mm. 710-15 of the Rondo-Finale). Whether it references *Tristan*, the Fifth’s Rondo-Finale, or both, this *cadential refrain* serves the purpose of providing F-major closure and acts as a regulating principle, always bringing the movement—not matter how far it strays—back to where it belongs.

¹³⁹ Davison, “Nachtmusik II: ‘Nothing but Love, Love, Love?’,” 89.

Section A does exhibit a rondo-like structure, with three iterations of its main theme and two contrasting sub-sections. The theme, frequently played by a solo horn, contains a small-scale romance narrative built into its periodic structure, displaying multiple musical agencies.

Example. 4.5: Symphony No. 7/IV, mm. 7-11



For accompaniment, Mahler utilizes plucked string instruments: guitar, mandolin, and harp. As Brown points out, “these instruments are associated with a gentleman singing a serenade outside a lady’s window. Mahler, a famous Mozart conductor, may have included the mandolin because of its use in the canzonetta ‘Deh vieni alla finestra’ in Act II of *Don Giovanni*, and the guitar was associated with the Mozart/Rossini character of Figaro.”¹⁴⁰ Extending the argument made for the Fifth Symphony, if the solo horn represents the heroic protagonist (in the Scherzo and Rondo-Finale), perhaps the same protagonist sings the *serenade* in this movement. As the above example demonstrates, the love song goes awry in measure 11. The horn plays an unexpected A-flat, creating a F-minor chord with an added B-natural in the clarinets and oboe, which breaks off the solo unexpectedly. The following measures (12-16), however, manages to put the *serenade* back on track. The horn takes up a second stanza of the main theme beginning in measure 17, but this derails again in measure 20 in the same manner as before. This time, a solo violin playing the *cadential refrain* steps in (mm. 23-25), bringing about a successful PAC in F major.

¹⁴⁰ Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire*, vol. 4, 691.

A-2 functions both as an *Abgesang* to the two stanzas of the main theme as well as a C-major transition. It also contains a small harmonic disjunction in measure 33 with an augmented B-flat major chord. But once again, the *cadential refrain* appears—this time for solo cello (mm. 35-37)—and transitions back to F major for another statement of the main theme. As before, A-1 contains two statements of the theme, but this time, it proceeds without harmonic disruption, as if liberated, to another statement of the *cadential refrain* and a PAC in F major (mm. 51-54). A-3 follows with another important intertextual reference. It begins with a violin melody that includes a series of descending arpeggios, each a half-step higher than the last (see mm. 55-59 and its continuation in mm. 64-71). Stoll Knecht notes that Mahler first worked out this idea in the back section of the sketchbook. In other words, it constitutes one of the earliest notated ideas of the Seventh, and it simultaneously connects motivically to the Finale of the Sixth.¹⁴¹ In this context, one hears the motive as striving towards some transcendent goal, but Mahler undermines this with another reference to the Sixth. In the low strings, a motivic idea that forms part of the *serenade* transforms into a dark, A-minor idea that recalls one of the main thematic ideas of the Sixth’s Finale.

Example 4.6: Symphony No. 7 – IV, mm. 72-75



¹⁴¹ Stoll Knecht, “Preliminary Sketches for Mahler’s Seventh Symphony,” 324. Specifically, she notes in appears in the context of the Finale’s S1 theme, mm. 201-4 and mm. 215-16).

Example 4.7: Symphony No. 6/IV, mm. 16-19



Although not an exact quotation, enough similarities exist between these examples to suggest a connection. One can interpret this motivic reference as the looming shadow of the Sixth threatening the stability of the *serenade*. This moment quickly passes, returning to the main theme in F major (m. 76). Section A closes with another complete statement of the main theme—including the dissonant disruption in measure 79—and concludes with a tranquil F-major codetta (mm. 93-98).

The development substantially reworks the A-section material. Although one could analyze Mahler's artful developmental procedures at length, the shifting emotional terrain forms the most important aspect of the B-section in terms of narrative. Another iteration of the Sixth-Symphony reference initiates the Development in measure 99 and appears several times (m. 150, m. 166, and m. 176), darkening the overall jovial atmosphere. Its final occurrence in the development—measures 176-86, marked *pp* to *ppp* and including the plucked instruments—creates a ghostly effect, reminiscent of passages (in mood, at least) from *Nachtmusik I* and the Scherzo. Mahler contrasts this with an interpolated episode (Floros describes it as a Trio), which profoundly affects the narrative.¹⁴² It unfolds in three sub-sections, the first beginning in B-flat major with a new theme played by a solo horn and solo cello (m. 187). The two soloists begin in unison, accompanied more or less by the same instruments as the *serenade*'s main theme. In

¹⁴² Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 204.

measure 194, the horn solo breaks off, and the entire cello section joins in with a three-fold statement of the *Ewigkeit* motive, making its first appearance in this love-song movement.

Example 4.8: Symphony No. 7/IV, mm. 198-203

The image shows a musical score for a bass clef instrument in 2/4 time. It consists of three measures, each containing a three-note motif (E-flat, G, A) with a slur over it. The first measure is marked *p espr.* and the third is marked *f*. Above each measure, the word *Ewigkeit* is written with a bracket indicating the three-note motif. Below the staff, there are four sets of double lines with arrows pointing outwards, indicating a crescendo or decrescendo.

This fulfills the failed aspirations of *Nachtmusik I*'s first Trio. It also serves a greater purpose: reestablishing the connection between the *Ewigkeit* motive and Alma within a romantic context and with Nature. Whereas the Sixth Symphony separated this motive from its associations with Nature, Mahler restores its proper signification here as both related to his love for Alma as well as its function as representative of divine Love in Nature. The contrasting sub-section in B-flat minor suggests that this reinstatement includes two further examples of the *Ewigkeit* motive (mm. 213-14 and mm. 220-21), both of which seem to express an intense yearning. This leads to the final sub-section, now in F major, which returns to the new theme with which the interpolation began. The cello section takes up the melody, and the solo horn joins in measure 236. Now, it remains in unison with the melody, including another three-fold statement of the *Ewigkeit* motive in measures 240-44. The richness of this climactic moment gradually fades into a brief ethereal *hymn* with harp accompaniment (mm. 253-56), reminiscent of the sound-world of the *Adagietto* and leading to the reprise of the A-section.

From a formal point of view, the reprise appears virtually the same as before, but some important after-effects of the interpolation create an enormous expressive difference. After the

return of the *cadential refrain*, the main theme occurs in two stanzas, followed by the *Abgesang* (A-2). The main theme resumes in measure 295, and beginning in measure 302, it begins to build toward what one would expect to be another iteration of the *cadential refrain*. At this moment, however, Mahler directly references the *Adagietto* with an almost literal quotation. In measures 308-10, the tension releases into an F-major arrival 6/4, accompanied by cascading arpeggios, which directly references measures 30-31 in the *Adagietto*. Even further, Mahler adds the solo horn, which plays the redeemed version of the *fate* motive from the Fifth's Rondo-Finale. Thus, Mahler recovers Part III of the Fifth to rebuke the implications of the Sixth. The passage that follows supports this interpretation. A-3 returns with the falling gestures from the Sixth, now in an ecstatic acceleration towards a climactic point (Mahler makes this clear in successive directions: *Etwas drängend* [m. 314], *Aufgeregt* [m. 320], *Sehr fließend* [321]). Instead of a dark turn toward A minor, Mahler redeems the motive of the Sixth's Finale by retaining the joyful mood and major-key tonality (mm. 328-31). After a final statement of the main theme, the movement ends tranquilly with a coda. Beginning in measure 354, the coda gradually winds down the accompanimental activity of the *serenade* and includes a brief reference to the interpolation theme for the solo horn (mm. 367-71). After a final disruption in the form of a fully-diminished seventh chord (m. 371), the movement ends peacefully in F major, completing the narrative of the *Nachtmusiken*.

The Nachtmusiken and the Emergent Ethical Aim

Taken together, the two *Nachtmusiken* present a coherent vision of what the entire symphony aims to do. By restaging—or more accurately, recomposing—key events or symbols from the other middle-period symphonies, Mahler aims to undo the implications of the tragic

Sixth by reinstating relevant aspects of the Fifth. This does not suggest that Mahler casually brushes off the critique offered by the Sixth Symphony. To the contrary, he uses the reality of the Sixth as something he must address in the Seventh, which explains the intimate relationship that both *Nachtmusiken*—particularly the first—share with their predecessor. At this point, however, it begins to become clear that the aesthetic of integration found in the Fifth Symphony now applies to the entire middle period: Mahler attempts to reconcile both the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies together within the Seventh, taking the specific form of reconciliation of Alma to Mahler through Love as a binding force in Nature. This is the implied ethical aim of the Seventh.

The Movements of 1905: A Brief Study in Recomposition

Before Mahler resumed work on the Seventh in 1905, the completed *Nachtmusiken* laid the groundwork for the remaining movements in terms of narrative and the manner by which Mahler would achieve that narrative, recomposition. The remainder of this analysis will take aspects of the first, third, and fifth movements and examine the ways they—like the *Nachtmusiken*—borrow from the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies. As previously noted, Mahler already possessed a clear conception of the Finale (as evidenced by the Moldenhauer sketches) and some ideas for the first movement. There exists no documentary evidence for the Scherzo to determine to what degree Mahler preplanned its themes or structure before 1905. Regardless, the remaining movements enhance and expand on the expressive conception of the *Nachtmusiken*. As for the notion of recomposition, Monahan argues that “major recompositions tend not to occur between adjacent works,” and undoubtedly, Mahler, more often than not, adheres to this.¹⁴³ But the Seventh serves as an exception. Monahan points toward an observation of Adorno in

¹⁴³ Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 30.

which he argues, “each of Mahler’s works criticizes its predecessor[, which] makes him the developing composer par excellence.”¹⁴⁴ What Monahan does not suspect, however, is that Mahler may “criticize” an adjacent work precisely by re-staging aspects of its central conflict toward different results. I argue that is precisely what occurs in the Seventh.

I. Langsam (Adagio) – Allegro risoluto, ma non troppo: Re-Staging 6/I

The first movement of the Seventh restages the first movement of the Sixth in several ways. Stoll Knecht notes that their closeness forms part of the negative reception of the work. She explains, “[t]hese two beginnings would be too similar to lead to two contradictory conclusions.”¹⁴⁵ This generalization ignores some obvious differences that set the Seventh apart, but the point remains that the two share numerous similarities in structure and in minute expressive details. First, the Seventh possesses a sonata-form of similar proportions to the earlier work (ignoring the presence of the slow Introduction), and both movements dramatize the contrast between their P and S materials. Furthermore, the P-themes share some gestural similarities (compare 6/I, mm. 6-7 to 7/I, mm. 50-52), and the S-themes share the all-important connection of the *Ewigkeit* motive. In the first movement of the Seventh, the exposition of S climaxes with a two-fold statement of the *Ewigkeit* motive (mm. 132-33), solidifying the connection with the “Alma” theme.¹⁴⁶ Both movements also present substantial T-themes, which play a part in the development. In the Seventh, the transition takes on more of a life of its own,

¹⁴⁴ Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, 84.

¹⁴⁵ Stoll Knecht, “Preliminary Sketches for the Seventh Symphony,” 301.

¹⁴⁶ One should note two variations from typical occurrences of the *Ewigkeit* motive from this example: the first instance in the two-fold statement presents component *y* on the downbeat of the measure, as is usually the case; second, both the first and second instances of the motive in these measures include variants of component *x* that consist of a half-step followed by a major-third leap instead of a purely step-wise three note sequence. In spite of this, it does correspond to the overall gestural qualities of the motive, and in the development, Mahler presents several unambiguous presentations of the *Ewigkeit* motive related to S.

leading some scholars to consider it as evidence of a Brucknerian three-key exposition. One of the most obvious structural similarities between 7/I and 6/I comes in the form of their lengthy *pastoral* interpolations in the development. Both interrupt the flow of events with a sudden cessation of activity followed by mysterious sounds and striking orchestral effects. The low B-flat pedal point of 6/I becomes the high sustained B-flat tremolos of the violins in 7/I. Both utilize hymn-like treatments of material: 6/I does this with its T materials (see the muted horns in mm. 205-8) and 7/I creates a similar effect with K motives (see the divisi violas, cellos, and basses in mm. 258-59). Additionally, 7/I includes the *fanfare* figures present in the Sixth's interpolation, with trumpets signaling the interpolation's arrival (mm. 256-57). Interestingly, the 6/I and 7/I episodes contain passages in E-flat and G major, and each frames a central lyrical section (6/I: mm. 217-33; 7/I: mm. 266-97) between areas of free-floating motivic interplay. While there remain several differences between them, these similarities provide significant evidence that Mahler used the Sixth's first movement as a model for the Seventh.

To highlight just a few other similarities, one might point to the tonal ambiguity surrounding the recapitulation of P. Of course, these passages contain numerous differences. The A major to A minor collapse of the 6/I's recapitulation does not closely resemble the surprising restatement of P in E major (m. 394) after first appearing in E minor (m. 373). These discrepancies notwithstanding, this modal shift occurs at the same structural location, enhancing the connection to the Sixth while not redundantly repeating it verbatim. Later in the recapitulation, Mahler appears to restage a dramatic moment from the Coda of 6/I.

Example 4.9: Symphony No. 7/I, mm. 465-66, Orchestral Reduction

Compare this with Example 3.29 from the previous chapter. The harmony, of course, is not the same (G# appoggiatura over a D major/minor chord in 6/I versus a C-major chord with several non-chord tones juxtaposed in 7/I), but Mahler uses both to similar effect. In both cases, he deliberately undermines a climactic statement of the *Ewigkeit* motive, momentarily casting doubt on its positive signification. The primary difference between these examples comes from their location in the form, which leads to a final observation: both movements end in the parallel major key. Whereas the A-major victory in the Sixth stems from the triumph of *Ewigkeit* (though Example 3.29 casts doubt on this), the Seventh's first movement ends with an unexpected and, perhaps, unearned shift to E major at the last second (m. 543). It seems, then, that despite similar outcomes, each movement arrives at the same conclusion through different means. The victory of E major does not take place as a result of the *Ewigkeit* motive. Rather, it appears to come from a source outside the thematic materials of the movement itself.

The first movement of the Seventh differs from that of the Sixth in part due to examples of recomposition from other sources, namely the Fifth. Monahan labels 7/I as an example of the "Incursive" sonata-form plot type, which it shares with 5/II. These movements draw considerable

material from the Funeral Marches that precede them.¹⁴⁷ For the Fifth, the sonata-form movement grows out of the *Trauermarsch*, a feature discussed at length in Chapter Two. In the Seventh, the opening slow introduction generates considerable material for the movement, namely its primary theme (organically developed out of the tenor horn theme through a series of stages) and the closing theme. Monahan notes another important structural similarity between 7/I and 5/II in that they share “double-rotational developments in which the first rotation closely follows the exposition but which yields to progressively freer treatment in the second rotation. . . . [I]n 7/I, they begin in mm. 145 and 212.”¹⁴⁸ The presence of an introductory Funeral March frequently invites comparisons to 3/I. Floros explains, “[b]oth movements [7/I and 3/I] open with slow introductions . . . and in both cases the introductions are completely integrated into the movements as they reappear in the development and the recapitulation. Moreover, recitative and arioso-like passages appear in both introductions, accompanied over long stretches by tremolos and funeral march rhythms.”¹⁴⁹ Taking these elements together, Mahler clearly engages in widespread recomposition for this movement—from the Sixth as well as from other sources—to retread and enhance important expressive themes of earlier works.

III. Scherzo. Schattenhaft: Inverting 5/III

The Scherzo of the Seventh relates to its predecessors in the mood it evokes and in some of its overt characteristics, rather than specific structural features. Some scholars note passing similarities with the Scherzo of the Fifth Symphony. Hefling suggests, “[i]n certain respects this is the impotent *Doppelgänger* of the Fifth’s ‘development scherzo’: whereas that distended waltz

¹⁴⁷ Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, 33.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 192.

transformed over the course of the entire symphony, this one only grows progressively nastier, proffering no transcendence.”¹⁵⁰ Brown makes a similar connection:

Though it is not as lengthy as the third movement of the Fifth Symphony, it has a number of characteristics in common with its predecessor: free synthesis of a Scherzo/Trio layout with elements of sonata form; strong emphasis on a single tonality, which here seems to counter the ambiguity of the first movement; use of characteristic markings, such as “Klagend,” “Etwas flotter,” “Flotter,” and “Wild” in a graduated order, as well as coloristic indications near the close e.g., “Kreischend” and “Grell.” As if to confirm its fraternal relationship to Symphony No. 5/3, Mahler quotes from the earlier model in the Trio (see mm. 179, 247). The Trio also makes allusions to the initial material of the first movement (mm. 210, 444, 486).¹⁵¹

The tonality of 7/III, an overwhelmingly pervasive D minor/major, reinforces the idea that this movement functions as a negative reflection of 5/III. The quotations mentioned by Brown do not so much suggest direct borrowing as motivic similarity, given the shared topics of *Ländler* and *Waltz*. References to 7/I come in the form of repetitions of motive “X.” In general, one might argue the character of the movement relates it to the Scherzo of the Sixth, if only for the distinct sense of *ombra* both of them possess. Floros observes that “[t]he first part (mm. 13-37) bears the features of a *perpetuum mobile*. The constant triplet motion that develops here forms the basis of the second section as well (mm. 38-53).”¹⁵² This brings to mind the Scherzo of the Second Symphony—an example of *perpetuum mobile* par excellence—in which Mahler wished to express an image of the world as “distorted and crazy, as if reflected in a concave mirror.”¹⁵³

One detects a similar motivation in this ghostly Scherzo. If 5/III expressed “a human being in the

¹⁵⁰ Hefling, “Song and Symphony (II). From *Wunderhorn* to Rückert and the middle-period symphonies,” 125. The term “development scherzo” comes from Adorno, but Floros believes that applying this term to 7/III “is debatable” because “the movement in no ways reaches the complexity of the Scherzo of the Fifth”; Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 201.

¹⁵¹ Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire*, vol. 4, 690.

¹⁵² Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 201.

¹⁵³ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 44.

full light of day, in the prime of his life,” then 7/III perhaps represents the same man in the dark of night, a ghost of his former self.

V. Rondo-Finale: Restaging 5/V

One could spend an enormous amount of time exploring various features of the Rondo-Finale, and scholarship has tended, generally, to give inordinate attention to its supposed quotations of Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger*, Lehár’s *The Merry Widow*, and Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, as examples of its fragmentary and faulty compositional quality. Although, as Kangas suggests, “[p]erhaps Mahler’s finale sounds so much like Wagner, because nearly every discussion of the movement written over the past century claims that Mahler’s finale sounds like Wagner.”¹⁵⁴ Even further, “[t]he steady repetition of the idea that Mahler has borrowed one of his main themes from Wagner has not only made it nearly impossible to hear the movement any other way, it also serves to naturalize the claim, making it seem like an observation of an objective musical fact rather than a subjective interpretation fraught with numerous extra-musical implications.”¹⁵⁵ In keeping with this just criticism, I will focus only on the shared characteristics between 7/V and its predecessor 5/V as it relates to recomposition. It would be an exaggeration to suggest that critics have completely ignored this connection. Kangas points to Hans Redlich’s critique of 7/V in which he argues “the movement seems jubilant without actually achieving true jubilation: its ‘tremendous gusto’ lacks the ‘inward conviction’ of even the Fifth Symphony’s finale.”¹⁵⁶ But the fact remains that the Seventh’s relationship to the

¹⁵⁴ Kangas, “Remembering Mahler,” 249.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 234.

Sixth overshadows some obvious similarities with the Fifth (and significant departures) that, generally, remain unexplored.

To begin with the most obvious connection, the two movements share an identical name: Rondo-Finale. Zychowicz notes that, for both movements, “it is possible to observe the closed structure of a rondo fusing with the tonal features of a sonata, thus blurring the distinctions between harmonic and architectonic levels.”¹⁵⁷ No other symphony in Mahler’s output shares this title or formal idea in its Finale, and the fact that these rondo movements follow the love songs of the *Adagietto* and *Nachtmusik II* also suggests that he deliberately restages Part III of the Fifth in the last two movements of the Seventh, a feature also noted by Zychowicz.¹⁵⁸ As for formal similarities between 7/V and 5/V, the Seventh does rework the rondo/sonata form paradigm of the Fifth, but this time, Mahler favors the rondo over the sonata form elements. Whereas the Fifth Symphony’s Finale contained clear development and recapitulatory spaces, the Seventh does not. Floros believes measures 269-90 constitute the movement’s development, but one could argue it begins much earlier with the presentation of Episode 1 (mm. 53-78, A-flat major) in A minor, beginning at measure 153.¹⁵⁹ Zychowicz explains, “it is not so much that there are developmental episodes in the Seventh, but rather a consistent development of thematic—and harmonic—ideas in the work. . . . In a sense, it is process rather than form that drives this movement.”¹⁶⁰ Additionally, the Refrain does not return in C major (in its initial and two subsequent presentations) until the movement’s end, denying the recapitulation found in the Fifth’s Rondo-Finale. The Seventh embraces the rondo concept more completely by returning to

¹⁵⁷ Zychowicz, “Ein schlechter Jasager,” 100.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

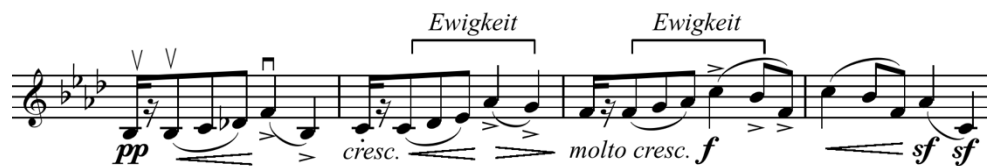
¹⁵⁹ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 207.

¹⁶⁰ Zychowicz, “Ein schlechter Jasager,” 100.

the Refrain significantly more often than 5/V. It occurs eight times throughout the course of the movement (as opposed for 5/V four returns), with substantial variations at each appearance.

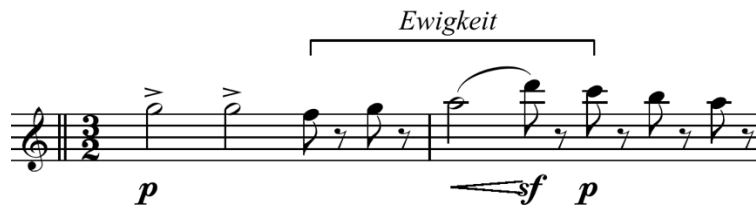
Mahler retains another structural/expressive similarity: both movements utilize the *Ewigkeit* motive predominantly within the context of the Episodes. Similar to the way 5/V includes wholesale quotations of the *Adagietto* in its second Episode, the Seventh's Finale includes reference to the *Ewigkeit* motive in its first Episode, which echoes (but does not exactly quote) passages from *Nachtmusik II* (see particularly Example. 4.8).

Example 4.10: Symphony No. 7/V, mm. 64-66



The motive also occurs in the context of Episode 2, which Mahler marks *Grazioso* as he did for the *Adagietto* quotations from 5/V.

Example 4.11: Symphony No. 7/V, mm. 100-1



The motive's association with the Episodes, as *pastoral* contrasts to the bombastic *fanfares* and *marches* of the Refrain, maintains the topical distinctions found in the Fifth Symphony, but as in

5/V, the *Ewigkeit* motive also forms part of the movement's climax. In 7/V, this occurs due to a transformation of its opening trumpet solo. The solo's initial appearance in measures 8-10 shares gestural similarities with the *Ewigkeit* motive, but does not constitute an exact reference. At the end of the movement, however, this idea, taken up by the horns and trumpets, now resembles the *Ewigkeit* motive within the context of the Refrain.

Example 4.12: Symphony No. 7/V, mm. 561-63

The image shows a musical score for two parts: '1. 3. Hr.' (Horns) and '1. Trp.' (Trumpet). The music is in 3/4 time. The top staff (Horns) starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a quarter rest. The bottom staff (Trumpet) starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G3, and then a quarter note A3. Both parts then play a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The 'Ewigkeit' motive is indicated by a bracket above the notes in both parts. The score includes various musical notations such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Thus, in the same way that Mahler closes the Fifth Symphony with the *Ewigkeit* motive as a symbol of the triumph of love, the Seventh Symphony closes in like manner by integrating the motive within the final, celebratory statement of the Refrain.

Lastly, the Finale of the Seventh recomposes the Fifth with another feature pertaining to the climax of the movement. Mahler returns to music from the earlier sonata form (in this case from 7/I) in order to achieve complete reconciliation between the beginning and end of the work. In the Fifth Symphony, this involved the celebratory return of the second movement's *Durchbruch*. In the Seventh, however, Mahler complicates this by returning to the primary theme of 7/I, which—after a series of attempts to reconcile with the Finale (m. 455-85, m. 492-99, m. 506-16)—he eventually completely integrates it into the final C-major Refrain (mm. 581-85). Significantly, each attempt before this final reconciliation coincides with a juxtaposition of the

Episode 2 theme (Example 4.11). The last of these passages, measures 506-16, finally breaks through in D-flat major and includes a clear reference to the *Ewigkeit* motive in its Episode 2 guise. It appears, then, that the *Ewigkeit* motive redeems the 7/I's P-theme and completes the reconciliation between the first and last movements. Rather than the optimistic hope for the future observed in the Rondo-Finale of the Fifth, the Seventh wrestles with its darker beginnings more directly and in the present tense. As Kangas argues, the fragmentary and disruptive quality to the movement reflects a kind of stream-of-consciousness discourse. He explains, "[s]tream of consciousness, as a mode of artistic expression, focuses . . . on an individual's perception at a given moment in time, regardless of the temporal orientation of the subject's consciousness."¹⁶¹ Thus, the chaotic discourse of the Finale that gave rise to negative criticisms actually constitutes Mahler's attempt to transform the wish-fulfillment of the Fifth, via the critique of that wish in the Sixth, into a genuinely positive, real-world outcome in the Seventh, one that is experienced in the unfolding present.

MAHLER'S AESTHETICS AND THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING

With the survey of Mahler's compositional process, the investigation of the Seventh's development, and the analysis of its recomposition completed, I will attempt to connect the conclusions from this investigation with their sources in Mahler's worldview. As discussed, the conviction that the symphony "must be like the world" relates directly to Mahler's views of the part and the whole both in Nature and in artistic expression. This sentiment, in purely aesthetic terms, combines the Enlightenment notion that art should reflect Nature with the Romantic conception of Nature as a gateway to the sublime, the transcendent, and the thing-in-itself. As a

¹⁶¹ Kangas, "Remembering Mahler: Music," 252.

microcosm of Nature, then, the symphony should reflect the Natural order. Mahler once told Anton von Webern, regarding his approach to counterpoint, “Nature is for us the model in this realm. Just as in nature the entire universe has developed from the primeval cell, from plants, animals, and men beyond to God, the Supreme Being, so also in music should a larger structure develop from a single motive in which is contained the germ of everything that is yet to be.”¹⁶² This remark, along with Mahler’s aesthetic values and compositional method, reveal his conception of the world and its relationship to the Divine. Specifically, it demonstrates an understanding of reality as emanating from and universally participating in a transcendent source of Being. In turn, this implies degrees of participation, creating a tiered arrangement of Nature. In describing his Third Symphony—the work that most directly expresses this idea—Mahler uses the phrase “hierarchy of organisms” to describe the arrangement of movements.¹⁶³ This sentiment aligns Mahler with a long history of thinkers and artists who viewed the world in terms of the “Great Chain of Being,” a concept that will illuminate aspects of Mahler’s aesthetic aims as well as unite aspects of his worldview as explored in the other case studies.

Eco discusses the philosophical roots of the Great Chain of Being in an essay devoted to the medieval thinker Ramon Llull, at once an influence on Kabbalistic mystics and also on Leibniz (who, through Goethe, bears some influence on Mahler’s worldview). Eco explains the concept as “Neo-Platonic in origin.”¹⁶⁴ Further, he provides a surprisingly close description to Mahler’s own view of the world:

Primitive Neo-Platonism, taken up in the Middle Ages in more or less tempered form, taught that the universe, entirely divine in nature, is the emanation of an unknowable and ineffable One, through a series of degree of being, or hypostases, produced by necessity

¹⁶² Hefling, “*Ihm in die Lieder zu blicken*,” 215. Originally, this quote comes from Hans Moldenhauer’s monograph *Anton von Webern* (1979), pg. 75.

¹⁶³ Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 164.

¹⁶⁴ Umberto Eco, “On Llull, Pico, and Llullism,” in *From the Tree to the Labyrinth: Historical Studies on the Sign and Interpretation*, trans. Anthony Oldcord, 385-423 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 400-1.

down to the lowest matter. Beings are thus arranged at progressively increasing distances from the divine One, and participate to an ever-decreasing extent in a divine nature that becomes degraded little by little to the point of disappearing altogether on the lower rungs of the ladder (or chain) of beings. From this state of affairs two principles follow, one cosmological, the other ethical-mystical. In the first place, if every step on the ladder of being is a phase of the same divine emanation, there exist relations of similarity, kinship, analogy between a lower state and the higher states—and from this root are derived all the theories of cosmic similarity and sympathy. In the second place, if the emanational ladder, on the one hand, represents a descent from the inconceivable perfection of the One to the lower degrees of matter, on the other, knowledge, salvation, and mystic union (strongly identified with each other in the Neo-Platonist view) imply an ascent, a return to the higher planes of the Great Chain of Being.¹⁶⁵

In this description, one finds elements that relate the Neo-Platonist conception of the world with several of the philosophers that influenced Mahler. In his discussion of the Third Symphony, Floros notes that Mahler's arrangement of movements "come close to ideas expressed much earlier by Athanasius Kircher," a figure Eco mentions as deeply influenced by Lull.¹⁶⁶ Floros continues, "Mahler hardly would have heard of Athanasius Kircher," but "Schopenhauer's 'stepwise succession of ideas' or 'hierarchy of beings' (inorganic nature, plant and animal kingdom, mankind) in whom the 'will' is objectified may indeed have been known to him along with the teachings of Gustav Theodor Fechner."¹⁶⁷ Undoubtedly, both Schopenhauer and Fechner influenced him in this regard, but other possible explanations will help solidify the connection between Mahler's view of Nature, his aesthetic values, and his practice of recomposition.

Walter provides the only contemporaneous reference to Hermann Lotze in connection with Mahler. While discussing Mahler's philosophical and religious leanings, Walter relates, "[h]is favorite reading was the philosophical aspects of science; Lotze's *Microcosmus* occupied

¹⁶⁵ Eco, "On Lull, Pico, and Llullism," 401-2.

¹⁶⁶ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 90; Eco, "On Lull, Pico, and Llullism," 386.

¹⁶⁷ Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 90.

him for a long time, especially in its development of the theory of the atom.”¹⁶⁸ An examination of Lotze’s thought reveals some obvious reasons for Mahler’s appreciation. First of all, he strikes a balance between metaphysical and scientific inquiry. Lotze argues:

It is true that the imperfection of human knowledge may compel us, when we have used our utmost endeavors to confess, that we cannot build up the results of cognition and of faith so as to form a complete and perfect structure; but we can never look on indifferently when we see cognition undermining the foundations of faith, or faith calmly putting aside as a whole that which scientific zeal has built up in detail. On the contrary, we must be ever consciously endeavoring to maintain the rights of each, and to show how far from insoluble is the contradiction in which they appear to be inextricably involved.¹⁶⁹

This obviously coheres with Mahler’s interest in science and his deeply held metaphysical views, and it helps to explain the questions raised by Barham’s essay concerning Mahler’s reaction to the *Berliner Tagblatt* article on mysticism. Mahler’s distaste for the purely materialistic worldview equaled his disdain for unscientific mysticism, and this forms an important aspect of Lotze’s thought. Even more significantly, the central aspect of *Microcosmus* relates to the Great Chain of Being, albeit with a more scientific approach.

Lotze begins from the starting point of the “mechanical view of Nature,” which does not seek an explanation for phenomena outside of the scientific and rational modes of thought. As Copleston summarizes, “[t]his mechanical interpretation of Nature, which is necessary for the development of science, should be extended as far as possible.”¹⁷⁰ In this vein, he explores the theory of atoms mentioned by Walter. Lotze explains:

For what appears to the senses, in a very small space, as a homogeneous and persistent element, is found to be after all variable during the progress of inquiry, or becomes split up, before the assisted eye, into a world of variety, and once more we see indefinite congeries of particles engaged in building up, by their action and reaction, those minute forms that cheat us with the appearance of a uniform and inwardly motionless existence. Hence it was necessary to take for granted that which perception did not reveal, because

¹⁶⁸ Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, 153.

¹⁶⁹ Hermann Lotze, *Microcosmus: An Essay Concerning Man and His Relation to the World*, vol. 1, trans. Elizabeth Hamilton and E. E. Constance Jones (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885), xi.

¹⁷⁰ Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7,” 378.

going on in a region to it inaccessible, and to seek the final constituents from their minuteness, persistent in their duration, and unchangeable in their properties. These atoms, now coalescing in most manifold fashion, now withdrawing unaltered from these fluctuating combinations, produce by the variety of their positions and motions the different kinds of natural products and their changeful development.¹⁷¹

In other words, at the base of all phenomena exist unchanging atoms, and every observable object consists of various combinations of these elements. All development and change occurs due to the rearrangement of these basic units. This, I argue, held Mahler's interest precisely because it reflects his practice of recomposition. In a passage from Bauer-Lecher quoted earlier in this study, Mahler describes the compositional process: "[c]omposing is like playing with bricks, continually making new buildings from the same old stones. But the stones have lain there since one's youth, which is the only time for gathering and hoarding them. They are all ready and shaped for use from that time."¹⁷² By way of analogy, Mahler viewed composition along similar lines to Lotze's understanding of atoms. Works arise out of raw, pre-existent material that the composer reclaims, so to speak, from older formulations.

While Lotze spends considerable time explaining the mechanical view of Nature, this constitutes only part of his entire view of reality. In the final chapter of *Microcosmus*, he puts forward the notion of the unity of all Being in a personal God:

We traced back the manifoldness of reality to *one* unconditioned primary Cause; and this One, which can give coherence to finite multiplicity and the possibility of reciprocal action to individual things, we found not in a law, not in an Idea, not in any cosmic order, but only in a Being capable of acting and suffering; in Mind alone, self-possessing and having self-existence.¹⁷³

In this regard, Lotze articulates his own conception of the Great Chain of Being. Copleston explains that, for Lotze, "all things are immanent in God, and . . . mechanical causality is simply

¹⁷¹ Lotze, *Microcosmus*, vol. 1, 31-32.

¹⁷² Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 131.

¹⁷³ Lotze, *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, 689.

the divine action.”¹⁷⁴ Because of this, Copleston labels his philosophy as “teleological idealism,” which presents “a vision of the world as an organic unity which is the expression of infinite Spirit’s realization of ideal value.”¹⁷⁵ As to the content of this ideal value—the *telos* implied in the name “teleological idealism”—Copleston explains that “the world cannot be simply a mechanical system without purpose or ethical value but must be conceived as progressively realizing a spiritual end.”¹⁷⁶ For Lotze, this end constitutes a realization of the Good in the form of Love, which itself signifies participation in the Divine Unity of Being:

Good and good things do not exist as such independent of the feeling, willing, and knowing mind; they have reality only as living movements of such a mind. What is good in itself is some felt bliss; what we call good things are means to this good but are not themselves this good until they have been transformed into enjoyment; the only thing that is really good is that Living Love that wills the blessedness of others. And it is just *this* that is the *Good-in-itself* for which we are seeking.¹⁷⁷

Therefore, the significance of Mahler’s practice of recomposition also reflects his two-sided understanding of Nature. On one level it reflects the organic processes of Nature in which primordial materials form and reform the phenomena of the world. Mahler understood this not merely as an analogy for composition. As he told Alma regarding his Eighth Symphony, “[s]o far the world has experienced nothing of the kind, and billions of years ago those primeval cells were pretty well organized, if one considers that even then they contained the seed of future works such as this.”¹⁷⁸ On the other hand, Mahler believed in God’s emanation in Nature, so that all things bear the stamp of this divinity while, simultaneously, yearning to reach higher degrees of participation in the “Living Love” that Lotze describes.

¹⁷⁴ Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, 380.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 380.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 381.

¹⁷⁷ Lotze, *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, 721.

¹⁷⁸ La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 363.

Of course, I do not suggest that Lotze's thought forms the entire basis of Mahler's outlook. While it seems likely that Mahler found the scientific descriptions of atomic particles and the mechanical processes of Nature congenial to his own thought, the pantheistic framework found in Lotze also characterizes the thought of Fechner and, of course, Goethe. In fact, Goethe may form the most foundational influence in this regard. Returning to *The Metamorphosis of Plants*—both treatise and poem—one finds these ideas converging once more. In discussing the reproduction of plants in his scientific writing, Goethe describes it as “the pinnacle of nature: propagation through two genders.”¹⁷⁹ Shortly after, he articulates this even more poetically: “with irresistible force and tremendous effort, nature formed the flowers and equipped them for works of love.”¹⁸⁰ From this description, one may infer that Goethe viewed these mechanical processes of plant reproduction as a specific manifestation of a transcendent Love, as a part participates in the whole. His poem of the same name supports this reading. Addressed to a “beloved,” Goethe describes the life cycle of plants:

Growing consider the plant and see how by gradual phases,
 Slowly evolved, it forms, rises to blossom and fruit.
 From the seed it develops as soon as the quietly fertile
 Womb of earth send it out, sweetly released into life,
 And to the prompting of light, the holy, for ever in motion,
 Like the burgeoning leaves' tenderest build, hands it on.
 Single, dormant the power in the seed was; the germ of an image,
 Closed in itself, lay concealed, prototype curled in the husk,
 Leaf and root and bud, although colorless yet, half-amorphous;
 Drily the nucleus so safeguards incipient life,
 Then, aspiring, springs up, entrusting itself to mild moisture,
 Speedily raises itself out of encompassing night.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Goethe, *Scientific Studies*, 76.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁸¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe: The Collected Works*, vol. 1, *Selected Poems*, ed. Christopher Middleton, trans. Michael Hamburger, David Luke, Christopher Middleton, John Frederick Nims, and Vernon Watkins (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 155.

Of course, this passage echoes Mahler's understanding of the part-whole relationship in regard to his compositional process. As the poem continues, Goethe begins to connect these natural occurrences to broader themes:

Yet the splendor becomes an announcement of further creation.
Yes, to the hand that's divine colorful leaves will respond.
And it quickly furls, contracts; the most delicate structures
Twofold venture forth, destined to meet and unite.
Wedded now they stand, those delighted couples, together.
Round the high altar they form multiple, ordered arrays.
Hymen, hovering, nears, and pungent perfumes, exquisite,
Fill with fragrance and life all the environing air.
One by one now, though numberless, germs are impelled into swelling,
Sweetly wrapped in the womb, likewise swelling, of fruit.
Nature here closes her ring of the energies never-exhausted
Yet a new one at once links to the circle that's closed,
That the chain may extend into the ages for ever,
And the whole be infused amply with life, like the part.¹⁸²

Goethe clearly alludes to human love with the anthropomorphized descriptions of plant reproduction, and he references both the part-whole connection as well as a transcendent prompting ("to the hand that's divine colorful leaves will respond") toward the initiation of this renewal. At the poem's end, he unites these two levels even more directly:

Yet if here you decipher the holy runes of the goddess,
Everywhere you can read, even though scripts are diverse:
Let the grub drag along, the butterfly busily scurry,
Imaging man by himself alter the pre-imposed shape.
Oh, and consider then how in us from the germ of acquaintance
Stage by stage there grew, dear to us, habit's long grace,
Friendship from deep within us burst out of its wrapping,
And how Amor at last blessed it with blossom and fruit.
Think how variously Nature, the quietly forming, unfolding,
Lent to our feelings now this, now that so different mode!
Also rejoice in this day. Because love, our holiest blessing
Looks for the consummate fruit, marriage of minds, in the end,
One perception of things, that together, concerted in seeing,
Both to the higher world, truly conjoined, find their way.¹⁸³

¹⁸² Goethe, *Selected Poems*, 157.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 159.

Therefore, Love prompts all things toward this greater union, leading to “the higher world.” This forms the ultimate purpose of all created things: to rise to the loftiest spheres of existence, through the calling of Love, in union with another. Now, one can fully observe the links between Mahler’s compositional practice, his beliefs about the world, and the ethical implications of his aesthetic values. If Mahler’s creative process—working toward the union of the part (the smallest musical ideas) and the whole (the conception of the work)—emerged directly from his convictions about the eminence of God in Nature (uniting all parts into a greater whole), then the ethical aim implied by Mahler’s aesthetic values—reconciliation, which leads to “the higher world”—emerges directly out of this worldview. In the Seventh Symphony, then, Mahler sets out to achieve just such a reconciliation with Alma through a recomposition of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies.

EPILOGUE

As a whole, the case studies present a relatively comprehensive picture of Mahler's worldview through a series of interlocking and interrelated concepts. Because these concepts frequently find expression through various levels of symbolism, assembling the entire picture creates difficulties of description. Any attempt will, undoubtedly, gloss over contradictions and tend to over-explain concepts that, in Mahler's mind, were vague or ill-defined. Simultaneously, the findings of each investigation, under the rubric of worldview structure, allow for a more detailed understanding of the way Mahler's compositions arise from his most fundamental beliefs. Therefore, I conclude this project with a summary of the findings, along with two other observations concerning how best to classify or understand Mahler's worldview.

For Mahler, all observable phenomena exist as a part of the divine emanation of God in Nature. Everything that exists possesses some degree of the wholeness of this Being reflected in its individual part. In turn, this produces the Great Chain of Being, a hierarchy of phenomena in relation to this Source. The fullness of God, as a macrocosmic whole, manifests in lower, microcosmic parts. Thus, the personal human experience miniaturizes the universal experience. Likewise, a work of art functions in microcosmic relation to its creator. Mahler's belief in this notion manifests itself in the aesthetic imperative "[t]he symphony must be like the world" because it is, at bottom, a reflection of its creator who, in turn, reflects the whole of reality. This also explains how Mahler's quest for narrative identity simultaneously functions as a universal spiritual quest, applicable to all humanity. In the Fifth Symphony, he grapples with the tragic aspects of existence—in particular his past traumatic experiences—in order to find *Erlösung* (as release and redemption) from suffering. The work poses a solution based on his understanding of

reality: integration of the self occurs through a reconciliation of past and present, and more fundamentally, union with another self, through love. Thus, Mahler's personal story connects to the universal narrative of suffering, the hope for salvation, and redemption through Love.

Mahler unites many of these concepts within a single musical symbol: the *Ewigkeit* motive, which the second case study identified with the metaphysical idea of soul. The almost universal applicability of this short motivic idea stems from how, as soul, it unites the two concepts related to the Divine Being—Nature and Love—and bifurcates both of them according to another central presupposition of Mahler's worldview. In line with Idealist philosophers since Kant, Mahler held that reality consists of two realms, phenomenal and noumenal, which applies to the two aspects of God (Nature and Love) that the *Ewigkeit* motive symbolizes. On the phenomenal side, one understands the concept of Nature as scientific and mechanical, which one would characterize as materialist on its own terms. As for Love, in the phenomenal world it manifests itself as *eros*—between persons or even in plants, as Goethe describes—in the form of procreation.¹⁸⁴ These phenomenal aspects of Love and Nature connect to the concept of soul as entelechy or spirit, the potential an object possesses to reach its teleological goal. Often, the *Ewigkeit* motive expresses this either as yearning (in a positive but, as yet, unfulfilled state of being) or as a negative polarity (minor-mode iterations as an aspirational plea). In either case, it represents the soul as an active principle, symbolically identified with archetypal masculinity and with the notion of striving. On the other hand, the noumenal side expresses Nature and Love as explicitly connected to God. Nature, in this sense, refers to the divine emanation or World-Soul. Love, in the noumenal sense, refers to *caritas* or *agape* as the love of God. Here, soul signifies a

¹⁸⁴ To add another layer of complexity to this symbolism, Mahler applies this to creativity as well, which explains his tendency to refer to his works as his children. Thus, artistic expressions stand in relationship to their creator as persons to God.

passive state of satisfaction and rest, identified with the archetypal feminine. In this context, Mahler uses the *Ewigkeit* motive to express transcendence, as in the Finales of the Second and Third, the slow movement of the Fourth, and Part II of the Eighth.

The tragedy of the Sixth, then, arises when the *Ewigkeit* motive loses its connection to these broad metaphysical associations. The motive's universality is reduced to the particular, which cannot stand against the reality of suffering and death. If the Fifth Symphony moves from alienation to union, the Sixth reverses this course with terrifying consequences. But the narrative does not end here. While putting the finishing touches on the Sixth, Mahler began working toward a resolution that would restore the *Ewigkeit* motive. The Seventh actively achieves this by focusing on Nature as a means of redeeming Love. In imitation of the evolutionary course of the world (teleologically directed by God-in-Nature toward reconciliation), Mahler reforms the pre-existing materials of the Fifth and Sixth into a new whole. Restoring the *Ewigkeit* motive's associations with Nature and Love on the noumenal level allows for the reconciliation with Alma that takes place in the second *Nachtmusik*. Therefore, the middle-period symphonies function as a single expressive unit, each building on and critiquing the work that came before, in a gigantic, unfolding worldview hypothesis, at once both personal and all-embracing.

Returning to Dilthey's investigation of worldviews, one finds in the middle-period symphonies a striking example of his notion of an "inner-dialectic" in worldview formation. Taken as a whole, these works function like the Hegelian dialectic in which a thesis (the Fifth) produces an antithesis (the Sixth), which come together in a synthesis (the Seventh). Given the reconstruction of Mahler's worldview from the analyses, one finds that he indeed fits into Dilthey's typological category of "Objective Idealism," which put forward the notion of the one-

ness of reality and desired participation within it as a form of universal sympathy.¹⁸⁵ One observes this value in the integrating tendencies of the middle-period works, which express Mahler's pursuit of reconciliation at varying levels. Most importantly, Dilthey identifies Objective Idealism with a poetic conception of the world connected to German literary figures: "[t]his ideal of life achieves its most intensive power in the poet's intuition: but he only gains clear insight into himself through moral reflection, through the development of a world view and insight into its presuppositions and implications."¹⁸⁶ This certainly exemplifies Mahler's continued striving to achieve identity- and worldview-formation in the creative act itself.

If one desired to connect all the components of Mahler's worldview to a single source, which figure encapsulates these ideas most completely? Dilthey provides the answer in connection with his discussion of Objective Idealism: "[n]o one has expressed this frame of mind more beautifully than Goethe."¹⁸⁷ The conclusion of each case study, through different means, links the expression of Mahler's worldview in these symphonies with an aspect of Goethe's thought. The third case study reveals Mahler's aesthetic values and compositional methods growing out of deeply held beliefs about the world and the relationship of the part to the whole, an idea explored poetically in Goethe's *The Metamorphosis of Plants*. The second case study elucidates this world-conception symbolically by relating the *Ewigkeit* motive to a Goethean understanding of the soul as consisting of both active and passive, masculine and feminine, aspects. The first case study explores how Mahler's quest for and expression of narrative identity arrived at an important conclusion: salvation occurs not by grace alone (*Durchbruch*) but through struggle and perseverance *and* divine grace, a notion derived straight from Goethe's

¹⁸⁵ Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, 152.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 152.

Faust. At the conclusion of Part II, as Faust's soul rises to meet Gretchen, the angels declare, "This worthy member of the spirit world / is rescued from the devil: / for him whose striving never ceases / we can provide redemption."¹⁸⁸ For Mahler, *Faust* constitutes the Ur-narrative of his worldview: striving, plus grace, equals salvation. Mahler interprets his own life story through this framework, which symbolically unites the associations found in the *Ewigkeit* motive and compels him to continue struggling onward in hope for reconciliation and redemption.

One final question to end this study: how do the results of these investigations answer the problems raised by other studies of this kind? First, regarding terminological precision, defining the concept of worldview and articulating its relationship to expression led to the thesis that artworks function as worldview hypotheses. Second, the scope of the project offered a more extensive treatment of the subject necessary for addressing the complexities of these works and ideas. Third, in terms of synthesis, I determined a hierarchy of influences within Mahler's worldview, rejecting the tendency to treat all influences as equally important to his thought. Finally, in application, this project reversed the traditional method of producing an interpretation of Mahler's works through privileging, *a priori*, a particular thinker or worldview-related idea. Instead, these case studies began with an analysis of the works themselves as a means of interpreting Mahler's worldview. Because of this methodology, the culmination of these case studies arrived at the conclusion that Mahler's worldview was formed, by and large, by the thought of Goethe. Of course, Mahler benefited immensely from the thought and work of many other figures. But if indeed, as Walter observed, "the sun in the sky of [Mahler's] spiritual world

¹⁸⁸ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe: The Collected Works*, vol. 2, *Faust I & II*, ed. and trans. Stuart Atkins (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 301.

was Goethe,” then all other philosophers and writers are merely refractions of that singular *Urlicht*, which formed the very core of his being and continues to shine through his music.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, 155.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Rehearsal Numbers, Measure Numbers, and Tempo Indications in the Fifth Symphony

First Movement

Rehearsal Number	Measure Number	Tempo Indication
N/A	1	In gemessenem Schritt. Streng. Wie ein Kondukt.
1	21	N/A
2	35	Etwas gehaltener.
3	61	Wie zu Anfang.
4	89	Wieder etwas gehaltener.
5	121	N/A
6	133	N/A
7	155	Plötzlich schneller. Leidenschaftlich. Wild.
8	173	N/A
9	195	a Tempo
10	211	N/A
11	239	6 mm. before R11: Allmählich sich beruhigend.
12	263	1 m. before R12: Schwer.
13	279	N/A
14	295	N/A
15	323	N/A
16	337	N/A
17	357	N/A
18	369	Klagend.
19	393	Schwer.

Second Movement

Rehearsal Number	Measure Number	Tempo Indication
N/A	1	Stürmisch bewegt. Mit grösster Vehemenz.
1	16	N/A
2	31	N/A
3	43	N/A
4	54	N/A
5	74	Bedeutend langsamer (<i>im Tempo des ersten Satzes "Trauermarsch"</i>)
6	101	N/A
7	116	N/A
8	129	N/A
9	141	Tempo 1 subito.
10	161	N/A
11	177	2 mm. after R11: Drängend.
12	214	Tempo moderato. (<i>wie im ersten Teil.</i>)
13	230	5 mm. after R13: Von hier an nicht mehr schleppen!
14	254	Tempo.
15	266	(Mid-bar) Plötzlich wieder bedeutend langsamer.— (<i>Tempo des ersten Satzes: Trauermarsch.</i>)
16	284	5 mm. after R16: Più mosso subito, aber immer noch nicht so schnell wie zu Anfang
17	308	Unmerklich drängend.
18	322	Tempo I subito.
19	336	N/A
20	352	N/A
21	372	N/A
22	388	N/A
23	400	1 m. after R23: Nicht eilen.
24	420	Etwas drängend.
25	436	N/A
26	448	1 m. before R26: Unmerklich drängend.
27	464	Pesante (<i>Plötzlich etwas anhaltend</i>)
28	478	1 m. after R28: Nicht schleppen. (Tempo 1)
29	501	N/A
30	520	Tempo I subito. Etwas langsamer, als zu Anfang
31	529	Nicht eilen.
32	539	N/A
33	557	a tempo (<i>molto moderato</i>)

Third Movement

Rehearsal Number	Measure Number	Tempo Indication
N/A	1	Kräftig, nicht zu schnell.
1	16	N/A
2	40	N/A
3	73	N/A
4	96	N/A
5	121	1 m. before R5: Wieder fliessend.
6	136	Etwas ruhiger.
7	174	Tempo I.
8	201	N/A
9	252	Wieder allmählich belebend.
10	270	1 m. after R10: Etwas zurückhaltend.
11	308	Molto moderato.
12	352	9 m. before R12: Fliessender, aber immer gemässigt.
13	389	Nicht eilen.
14	419	a tempo
15	448	Tempo I.
16	476	N/A
17	490	N/A
18	516	N/A
19	527	N/A
20	550	N/A
21	563	Nicht schleppen.
22	579	N/A
23	602	N/A
24	628	Wieder zum Tempo I zurückkehrend.
25	648	Vorwärts drängend.
26	662	N/A
27	686	N/A
28	705	Tempo I. (<i>subito</i>)
29	726	a tempo
30	756	a tempo (<i>mässig</i>)
31	783	N/A
32	803	N/A

Fourth Movement

Rehearsal Number	Measure Number	Tempo Indication
N/A	1	Sehr langsam.
1	19	N/A
2	39	Fliessender.
3	72	N/A
4	85	4 mm. after R4: Noch langsamer.

Fifth Movement

Rehearsal Number	Measure Number	Tempo Indication
N/A	1	2 m. after beginning: Allegro.
1	39	N/A
2	56	sempre l'istesso Tempo.
3	88	N/A
4	100	8 mm. before R4: Grazioso.
5	136	a tempo I. subito
6	159	N/A
7	177	Nicht eilen.
8	223	N/A
9	241	Fliessend.
10	273	N/A
11	297	N/A
12	318	11 mm. before R12: sempre l'istesso Tempo.
13	333	N/A
14	349	N/A
15	365	N/A
16	389	N/A
17	423	8 mm. before R17: Nicht eilen. a tempo
18	441	N/A
19	465	N/A
20	483	N/A
21	497	Plötzlich wieder wie zu Anfang. (Tempo I.) [<i>Allegro commodo (subito)</i>]
22	511	Nicht eilen.
23	526	N/A
24	538	N/A
25	558	N/A
26	575	N/A
27	592	8 mm. before R27: Unmerklich etwas einhaltend.
28	623	N/A
29	641	N/A
30	659	N/A
31	687	Allmählich und stetig drängend.
32	711	N/A
33	725	Sehr drängend.
34	749	Allegro molto und bis zum Schluß beschleunigend.
35	775	N/A

Rehearsal Numbers, Measure Numbers, and Tempo Indications in the Outer Movements of the Sixth Symphony

First Movement

Rehearsal Number	Measure Number	Tempo Indication
N/A	1	Allegro energico, ma non troppo. Heftig, aber markig
1	6	N/A
2	14	N/A
3	25	N/A
4	31	N/A
5	45	N/A
6	53	N/A
7	61	Stets das gleiche Tempo
8	77	Schwungvoll
9	85	a tempo
10	91	N/A
11	98	N/A
12	107	a tempo
13	115	a tempo (mid-measure)
14	123/123b	Tempo I
15	135	N/A
16	144	N/A
17	152	N/A
18	166	N/A
19	178	N/A
20	187	N/A
21	196	Allmählich etwas gehaltener (mid-measure)
22	217	Sehr ruhig. Grazioso
23	225	N/A
24	234	N/A
25	251	Tempo I subito. Sehr energisch!
26	267	Nicht eilen!
27	278	N/A
28	286	N/A
29	290	N/A
30	304	N/A
31	310	N/A
32	322	N/A
33	334	N/A
34	344	N/A
35	352	Unmerklich drängend
36	365	a tempo (last beat)
37	382	Più mosso subito (Wie wütend dreinfahren)

		(Quasi Tempo I ganz wenig belebt)
38	390	L'istesso tempo
39	402	N/A
40	417	1 m. after R40: Nicht schleppen
41	429	N/A
42	444	2 mm. after R42: Pesante
43	457	8 mm. before R43: Von hier bis zum Schluß etwas drängend
44	467	N/A
45	475	a tempo (subito)

Fourth Movement

Rehearsal Number	Measure Number	Tempo Indication
N/A	1	Allegro moderato
104	16	Etwas schleppend
105	39	9 mm. before R105: Allmählich etwas fließender
106	49	Schwer. Marcato (ungefähr l'istesso Tempo)
107	65	2 mm. after R107: Etwas fließender
108	82	1 m. after R108: Allmählich zum nächsten Tempo steigern
109	98	Allegro moderato
110	114	Allegro moderato
111	122	N/A
112	132	N/A
113	139	Pesante
114	149	N/A
115	160	N/A
116	176	N/A
117	191	Sempre l'istesso Tempo (Fließend)
118	205	N/A
119	217	Belebend
120	229	3 mm. after R120: Etwas zurückhaltend
121	239	Langsam. Schleppend (Viertel)
122	258	Poco più mosso (aber nicht eilen)
123	271	(Immer Halbe, ohne zu drängen)
124	288	Sostenuto
125	296	N/A
126	304	N/A
127	313	N/A
128	328	N/A
129	336	a tempo. Wie eben vorher (immer Halbe)
130	352	N/A
131	364	In Tempo etwas beruhigend
132	372	Schon langsamer
133	381	4 mm. after R133: Etwas wuchtiger. Alles mit roher Kraft 4/4 schlagen, aber nicht schleppen, ungefähr Tempo I. Allegro energico
134	397	Kräftig, aber etwas gemessen (ganz unmerklich einhaltend)
135	415	Feurig (Immer dasselbe Tempo)
136	426	N/A
137	441	4 mm. after R137: Etwas drängend
138	138	N/A
139	458	Allmählich sich beruhigend (immer 4/4)

140	479	Pesante
141	489	Nicht schleppen
142	504	Stets etwas drängend
143	520	Wieder etwas zurückhaltend (Immer Halbe)
144	537	Etwas schleppend
145	550	5 mm. after R145: Fließender
146	561	Stets 4/4
147	575	Grazioso (Immer noch 4/4)
148	586	Straffer im Tempo, allmählich in Halbe übergehen
149	598	Pesante (aber Halbe)
150	610	Vorwärts
151	625	1 m. before R151: Unmerklich noch etwas drängender
152	634	N/A
153	642	Tempo I (Allegro energico 4/4)
154	650	N/A
155	660	N/A
156	668	N/A
157	678	N/A
158	686	N/A
159	700	N/A
160	712	N/A
161	728	Bewegter, aber nicht eilen! (Halbe)
162	744	N/A
163	765	Pesante
164	773	4 mm. after R164: Etwas zurückhaltend
165	790	Bedeutend langsamer (aber immer noch Halbe)
166	808	Immer langsamer

Rehearsal Numbers, Measure Numbers, and Tempo Indications in the *Nachtmusiken* of the Seventh Symphony

Second Movement (Nachtmusik I)

Rehearsal Number	Measure Number	Tempo Indication
N/A	1	Allegro moderato
69	10	N/A
70	16	N/A
71	20	Nicht eilen! Nicht anschwellen!
72	30	Tempo I subito, molto moderato (Andante). Sehr gemessen
73	37	N/A
74	46	2 mm. after R74: Nicht eilen
75	54	N/A
76	62	N/A
77	70	N/A
78	78	N/A
79	83	Sempre l'istesso Tempo. Nicht eilen, sehr gemächlich
80	94	2 mm. after R80: Gemessen
81	100	N/A
82	110	N/A
83	118	N/A
84	126	N/A
85	137	4 mm. after R85: Gehalten
86	144	N/A
87	149	N/A
88	156	5 mm. after R88: Poco meno mosso
89	165	N/A
90	173	N/A
91	179	6 mm. after R91: Drängend
92	189	a tempo
93	199	N/A
94	205	N/A
95	211	N/A
96	222	1 m. after R96: Tempo
97	230	N/A
98	238	N/A
99	245	N/A
100	252	N/A
101	262	N/A
102	270	N/A
103	278	N/A
104	286	N/A

105	295	Sehr gemessen
106	302	N/A
107	312	N/A
108	318	N/A
109	326	N/A
110	334	N/A
111	337	N/A

Fourth Movement (Nachtmusik II)

Rehearsal Number	Measure Number	Tempo Indication
N/A	1	Andante amoroso
175	8	N/A
176	15	N/A
177	23	N/A
178	31	3 mm. before R178: Gehalten
179	38	N/A
180	46	N/A
181	54	N/A
182	64	N/A
183	71	N/A
184	79	N/A
185	85	4 mm. after R185: Etwas anhaltend
186	93	1 m. before R186: Tempo
187	99	N/A
188	111	N/A
189	122	N/A
190	126	N/A
191	134	4 mm. after R191: Steigernd
192	142	Sehr fließend
193	149	N/A
194	158	Etwas drängend
195	166	Wieder a tempo
196	176	N/A
197	187	N/A
198	194	N/A
199	199	N/A
200	207	4 mm. before R200: Gehalten
201	215	N/A
202	222	N/A
203	232	N/A
204	241	Nicht eilen
205	247	3 mm. before R205: Breit
206	255	2 mm. before R206: a tempo
207	262	3 mm. before R207: Tempo I
208	271	N/A
209	279	N/A
210	288	4 mm. before R210: Nicht eilen
211	295	N/A
212	303	N/A
213	311	a tempo
214	319	1 m. after R214: Aufgeregt

215	327	6 mm. before R215: Sehr fließend
216	335	3 mm. before R216: Tempo I subito
217	341	N/A
218	351	N/A
219	359	N/A
220	367	N/A
221	375	N/A
222	382	N/A

Appendix B

Goethe's *The Metamorphosis of Plants* (1798) – German Originals of the Selected Passages in Translation from *Goethe: The Collected Works*

Werdend betrachte sie nun, wie nach und nach sich die Pflanze,
Stufenweise geführt, bildet zu Blüten und Frucht.
Aus dem Samen entwickelt sie sich, sobald ihn der Erde
Stille befruchtender Schoß hold in das Leben entläßt
Und dem Reize des Lichts, des heiligen, ewig bewegten,
Gleich den zärtlichsten Bau keimender Blätter empfiehlt.
Einfach schlief in dem Samen die Kraft; ein beginnendes Vorbild
Lag, verschlossen in sich, unter die Hülle gebeugt,
Blatt und Wurzel und Keim, nur halb geformet und farblos;
Trocken erhält so der Kern ruhiges Leben bewahrt,
Quillet strebend empor, sich milder Feuchte vertrauend,
Und erhebt sich sogleich aus der umgebenden Nacht.

* * *

Aber die Herrlichkeit wird des neuen Schaffens Verkündung.
Ja, das farbige Blatt fühlet die göttliche Hand,
Und zusammen zieht es sich schnell; die zärtlichsten Formen,
Zwiefach streben sie vor, sich zu vereinen bestimmt.
Traulich stehen sie nun, die holden Paare, beisammen,
Zahlreich ordnen sie sich um den geweihten Altar.
Hymen schwebet herbei, und herrliche Düfte, gewaltig,
Strömen süßen Geruch, alles belebend, umher.
Nun vereinzelt schwellen sogleich unzählige Keime,
Hold in den Mutterschoß schwellender Früchte gehüllt.
Und hier schließt die Natur den Ring der ewigen Kräfte;
Doch ein neuer sogleich fasset den vorigen an,
Daß die Kette sich fort durch alle Zeiten verlänge,
Und das Ganze belebt, so wie das Einzelne, sei.

* * *

Aber entzifferst du hier der Göttin heilige Lettern,
Überall siehst du sie dann, auch in verändertem Zug.
Kriechend zaudre die Raupe, der Schmetterling eile geschäftig,
Bildsam ändre der Mensch selbst die bestimmte Gestalt.
O, gedenke den auch, wie aus dem Keim der Bekanntschaft
Nach und nach in uns holde Gewohnheit entsproß,
Freundschaft sich mit Macht in unserm Innern enthüllte,

Und wie Amor zuletzt Blüten und Früchte gezeugt.
Denke, wie mannigfach bald diese, bald jene Gestalten,
Still entfaltend, Natur unsern Gefühlen geliehn!
Freue dich auch des heutigen Tags! Die heilige Liebe
Strebt zu der höchsten Frucht gleicher Gesinnungen auf,
Gleicher Ansicht der Dinge, damit in harmonischem Anschauen
Sich verbinde das Paar, finde die höhere Welt.

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